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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to improve high school writing and writing instruction. Teachers are encouraged to make transparencies and handouts of the information in this guide in order to make the information accessible to students. Using the scoring rubrics and model papers, students can be taught to recognize both strong and weak areas in their own writing. The Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) is a test of persuasive writing. The guide explains how to establish and effective writing program. Main sections in the guide are devoted to: writing instruction; scoring; sample prompts; and student writing samples. Additional resources contain a 22-item GHSWT Domain Terminology; and Diagnostic Statements from the Individual Student Score Report. Contains a 19-item list of recommended reading. Includes handout samples such as: a writing prompt; a sample of student test materials; the persuasive writing process in the testing context; graphic organizers; and a jot list prewriting activity. (PM)

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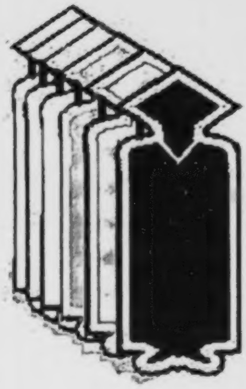

Assessment and Instructional Guide for the Georgia High School Writing Test

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Georgia Department of Education
Linda C. Schrenko, State Superintendent of Schools
June 2001

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Preface

The **Assessment and Instructional Guide for the Georgia High School Writing Test** was developed by a group of educators to be used by high school teachers. Will Rumbaugh and Gerald Boyd of the Georgia Department of Education and Belita Gordon, Candace Langford, and Jeremy Granade of Test Scoring and Reporting Services, University of Georgia assisted the authors listed below.

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Georgia Department of Education
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June 2001

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Part One: The Georgia High School Writing Test at a Glance

How to Use the Assessment and Instructional Guide for the GHSWT

Teachers are encouraged to make transparencies and handouts of the information in this guide in order to make the information accessible to students. Use the scoring rubrics and model papers to teach students to recognize both strong and weak areas in their own writing. As they become familiar with the domains of effective writing and the characteristics of essays that receive high scores, students will inevitably feel more prepared to succeed.

Using the rubrics and sample papers in this guide, a teacher can create numerous instructional opportunities to introduce and practice self or peer evaluation. After students are introduced to the scoring rubrics, the teacher can look at each domain of effective writing with students, facilitating their understanding through the use of the sample papers. Students should be allowed to score papers, working in small groups to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each paper. The sample papers have been annotated to include teaching tips and instructional activities that, if implemented, would result in improved writing—and higher scores.

Students should realize that writing is a process of discovery which transcends the English classroom. In order for students to learn to write coherently and persuasively, an interdisciplinary approach should be developed. Writing in the English classroom should reflect learning that is occurring throughout the high school curriculum. Content area writing will strengthen students' ability to synthesize content in a logical and organized form. Not all students will be English majors; writing only about literature limits their experiences. Interdisciplinary experience need not be limited to writing activities. Students should also be encouraged to read across the disciplines because a wide range of reading provides topics and issues for writing, gives students a sense of the nature of written language, and opens up perspectives of the wider world which writers need to understand in order to become better writers.

The icon 📖 indicates that related information is provided in the sections and pages specified.

Persuasive Writing—Definition/Explanation

The Georgia High School Writing Test is a test of persuasive writing. In persuasion, the writer assumes a position on an issue and uses language to influence the reader.

The purpose is to express a writer's opinion on a subject either explicitly or implicitly.

Through the support provided, the writer presents a convincing point of view.

Support for the writer's position should include evidence such as logical appeals, emotional appeals, facts (which may or may not be accurate), personal experiences, extended narratives, etc.

See Relevant Supporting Ideas, page 118-120

Establishing an Effective Writing Program

1. First and foremost, expect, teach, and celebrate a wide range of student writing as an integral part of your curriculum and daily instruction.

2. Be sure students see a range of student writing (in a variety of genres and modes of discourse, on a variety of topics, to a range of audiences) on a regular basis. Provide students with many opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes as required by the QCC Content Standards.

   See Part Two, pages 21-24

3. Guide students in assessing their own writing and writing processes. After students have written, ask them to generate a list of criteria for what makes a good piece of writing of this type. Compare their list to that of the GHSWT scoring rubrics and use this insight to help them discover the universal qualities of good writing in any subject area.

4. Invite students to read widely in all content areas. Wide reading provides both content knowledge and a sense of written language. Work with content area teachers to use writing to teach students to think, reason, solve problems, monitor their own learning, and reflect on their work.

5. Teach students to use a variety of writing techniques such as the use of personal experience, anecdote, humor, fiction, fantasy, definition, straw man, satire, and hypothetical or actual scenario. These techniques can be used in persuasive (and other types of) writing.

6. Encourage students to become observers of and writers about the world around them, the issues about which people talk, and their own thoughts.

7. Knowledge of effective writing instruction has increased dramatically in the past decade. To familiarize yourself with this information, read widely in current professional journals and publications, such as those listed in Additional Resources (page 124). Take advantage of professional conferences and staff development opportunities in order to expand your knowledge about effective writing instruction.

Prompt Specifications and Sample Prompt

The GHSWT topics are often referred to as "prompts," for their purpose is to prompt or elicit a writing sample in an on-demand setting. Writing prompts contain the six elements described below. Each prompt is divided into two clearly marked parts: the Writing Situation and the Directions for Writing.

1. Issue

The issue is to be of enough complexity to allow for the expression of diverse viewpoints. The issue should be relevant to the experiences and interests of Georgia's high school students. Topics are drawn from teen and school-based issues, societal concerns, and diverse content areas (such as the social sciences and sciences). The variety of topics is intended to foster writing across the curriculum and to allow for differences in students' prior knowledge.

2. Descriptive Setup

The issue is presented within a framework that engages the writer's interest, provides a realistic context for examining the issue, and presents enough information to familiarize any potentially uninformed writer with the nature of the issue. The context may be historical, literary, current, or hypothetical. Key terms that might be unfamiliar are to be defined, paraphrased, or illustrated with examples.

3. Knowledge Base

Writers should be able to produce a complete and competent response using knowledge gained through either personal or academic experiences or a combination of these sources.

4. Writer's Intent and Writing Task

Cues in the wording of the prompt should make it clear whether the writer is to

- examine different sides of a controversy
- choose a position and provide support for that position
- analyze a problem and its solution(s). The organization or structure of the writing sample is to be appropriate to the task.

5. Audience

Audience is specified. The audience may range from the familiar (fellow students or family members) to the distant (legislators, school board members, newspaper subscribers).

6. Form

Form is specified. However, the conventions of form, such as the inside address or salutation of a business letter, are not evaluated. Although they are part of the QCC, they are not taught to all students prior to the test administration. Possible forms include letters, speeches, compositions, position papers, and papers to be read aloud.

A complete sample prompt is provided below.

Writing Prompt, Number 1

Writing Situation

The issue of censoring or banning books has received much national attention. Recently, however, the controversy became a local issue when parents in your community objected to a book that their teenager had obtained from the high school library. The parents' campaign to have the book removed permanently from the library has aroused mixed reactions from students, teachers and other parents. Decide how you feel about the issue of banning books.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper in which you either defend a parent's right to have a book banned or oppose such a ban. Clearly state your position. Try to convince readers of the paper to agree with you by providing well-developed supporting arguments.

📖 See Additional Resources, Blackline Masters, at the end of the Guide

📖 See Part Five, Sample Prompts, pages 51 - 54

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The prompt is repeated with each of the six elements labeled.

1. Issue

2. [Descriptive Setup]

Writing Prompt, Number 1

Writing Situation

The issue of censoring or banning books has received much national attention. Recently, however, [the controversy became a local issue when parents in your community objected to a book that their teenager had obtained from the high school library. The parents' campaign to have the book removed permanently from the library has aroused mixed reactions from students, teachers and other parents.] Decide how you feel about the issue of banning books.

3. Knowledge base is implicit in the issue. Students can respond on a personal basis (what if books I wanted to read were censored) or an academic basis (first amendment rights, freedom of speech).

6. Form and Audience

4. [Writer's Purpose and the Writing Task]

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper in which you [either defend a parent's right to have a book banned or oppose such a ban.] Clearly state your position. Try to convince readers of the paper to agree with you by providing well-developed supporting arguments.

5. Audience

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The Scoring System

This page contains a summary of the domains of effective writing that are assessed on the Georgia High School Writing Test.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL WRITING TEST SUMMARY OF THE SCORING DOMAINS, DEFINITIONS, AND COMPONENTS

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION DOMAIN.

The writer establishes the controlling idea through examples, illustrations, facts, or details. There is evidence of a sense of order that is clear and relevant. (Weight = 40%)

- Response to assigned task
- Clearly established controlling idea
- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly developed supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

STYLE DOMAIN.

The writer controls language to establish his or her individuality. (Weight = 20%)

- Effective diction
- Varied and effective sentence structure
- Tone consistent with topic and purpose
- Sense of audience

CONVENTIONS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE DOMAIN.

The writer uses the conventions appropriate for standard American written English. (Weight = 20%)

- Appropriate usage
- Appropriate mechanics

SENTENCE FORMATION DOMAIN.

The writer forms sentences correctly. (Weight = 20%)

- Appropriate end punctuation
- Complete sentences or functional fragments
- Appropriate coordination and/or subordination

See Part Six, Student Writing Samples, pages 57-116

Analytic and Holistic Scoring

The scoring system is analytic. **Analytic** scoring means that more than one feature (domain) of a paper is evaluated. Each domain itself is scored **holistically**. The score assigned indicates the test rater's overall impression of the writer's command of the components, using predetermined scoring criteria contained in the Scoring Guidelines for each domain. **Holistic scoring** requires balancing a writer's strengths and weaknesses in the various components.

The Georgia High School Writing Test Scoring Process

All raters have four-year college degrees and complete a twenty hour training program. Before the raters are allowed to score actual student papers, they must pass a qualifying test. After passing this test, their accuracy is monitored, and retraining is administered if necessary. Raters range in age from 21 to 75. Some raters are recent college graduates, others are homemakers, and others are retired professionals (including teachers). Thirty to 40 experienced raters who have scored papers for many years and 50 to 60 newly hired raters score the student papers.

Several processes are in place to control the quality of the assigned ratings. Scores are recorded on a monitor sheet. No marks are made on the student paper. These processes ensure that the two raters who score each paper work independently and do not influence each other's ratings. Scores are compared for agreement between the two raters; if scores do not agree, the paper is read by a member of the TSARS staff to determine the score that should be assigned. Should any rater fail to meet daily accuracy standards, that individual is dismissed; the rater's scores are discarded, and the papers are scored again to ensure that students receive the correct scores. The raters see only the student papers, not any demographic information that would identify the individual student writer, the school, or the system.

Each paper is scored in four domains: **Content/Organization**, **Style**, **Conventions**, and **Sentence Formation**. Scores in each domain range from a low of 1 to a high of 4. The total weighted raw scores range from a low of 20 (1's in all four domains) to the highest raw score of 80 (4's in all four domains). A weighted raw score of 40-44 (depending on the difficulty of the writing prompt) is considered a passing score. The charts below explain how each of the domains is weighted to arrive at the total weighted score. Weighting means that the score a rater assigns is multiplied by the weight (or importance) assigned to a domain.

DOMAIN	DOMAIN WEIGHT	CALCULATION OF WEIGHTED RAW SCORE
Content/Organization (C/O)	40%	4 x each rater's raw score
Style (S)	20%	2 x each rater's raw score
Conventions (C)	20%	2 x each rater's raw score
Sentence Formation (SF)	20%	2 x each rater's raw score

An example of how the total weighted raw score is calculated follows. Rater A assigns a "3" in Sentence Formation and "2" in the other domains. Rater B independently assigns the score of "2" to the same paper in all four domains.

	C/O Raw Score	S Raw Score	C Raw Score	SF Raw Score
Rater A	2	2	2	3
Rater B	2	2	2	2

Rater A

Domain Raw Score		Weight		Weighted Domain Total
score of "2" in Content/Organization	x	4	•	8
score of "2" in Style	x	2	•	4
score of "2" in Conventions	x	2	•	4
score of "3" in Sentence Formation	x	2	•	6
Sum of Rater A's Weighted Domain Scores				22

Rater B

Domain Raw Score		Weight		Weighted Domain Total
score of "2" in Content/Organization	x	4	•	8
score of "2" in Style	x	2	•	4
score of "2" in Conventions	x	2	•	4
score of "2" in Sentence Formation	x	2	•	4
Sum of Rater B's Weighted Domain Scores				20

Sum of Weighted Scores from Rater A + Rater B = Total Weighted Raw Score = 42

These total raw scores are then scaled to adjust for small differences in prompt difficulty. That is why students receive scaled scores on their reports. Scaled scores are used so that the scores from one edition of the writing test may be equated to, and mean the same thing as, scores from other versions of the test. By changing raw scores to scaled scores, adjustments may be made for any small differences between the various test editions. The scale ranges from 400 to 600; 500 or higher is passing. The individual domain diagnostic statements in the Additional Resources portion of the Guide indicate the raw scores assigned by the two raters.

📖 See Additional Resources, at the end of the Guide

📖 See Part Four, pages 45-48

What Teachers Need to Know

Questions and Answers About the Georgia High School Writing Test

1. **How are the writing prompts chosen?**
In the initial stages of prompt development, many writing prompts are written and approved by an advisory committee consisting of teachers and administrators from all over Georgia. Once the final version of these prompts is approved, they are field-tested with a representative sample of students from the state. After the field-test papers are scored, prompts are analyzed to determine if they are of comparable difficulty to other prompts in the test-secure bank. Then a bias review meeting with another advisory committee is conducted. Those prompts which are free of bias then become part of the official prompt bank.

2. **Why does it take so long to get the results of the writing tests?**
When we receive the test documents (approximately 75,000 papers from the main fall administration), they must first be scanned for demographic information. Then the folder is cut in half so that raters see only the final draft, not the student demographic information. The final drafts are then randomly assembled into packets of 24 to be scored. It takes 60-100 raters approximately 6 weeks to score all of the student papers. Each paper is scored independently by two raters. Once the papers are scored, student, school, and system reports are created and shipped to each school system. No results can be sent until all of the papers are scored, all the data are analyzed, and all the reports are printed.

3. **Is it okay to have my students write on prompts given in previous administrations?**
Absolutely not. Prompts are part of a test-secure bank that cannot be discussed, copied, reproduced, or shared in any manner. As noted on the front page of the GHSWT Examiner's Manual, "Failure to safeguard these materials or to comply with test administration procedures could adversely affect an individual's certification status. Such practices will be reported to the Georgia Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission as failure to adhere to established policies and procedures." Eight practice prompts are included in this guide. These eight prompts are public domain and can be used by teachers, students, and parents.

4. **How should the students practice for the test?**
We encourage schools to have a "practice test" in which the students go through the same procedure as they would during the real test. The Guide contains public writing topics and directions to simulate the actual writing assessments. Students may be more comfortable taking the test if they are familiar with the time limits, amount of space on the test booklet, and the format of the writing topics.

5. **Is instruction in the five paragraph essay sufficient preparation for the GHSWT?**
In general, no. It is important for writers to organize their ideas. For the lowest level writers, a formulaic approach provides a beginning structure for their writing. However, a formulaic structure alone is insufficient and often leads weak writers into repetition rather than development. For a formulaic approach to "work," the writer must make the paper complete by adding details and examples to the structure, instead of simply repeating the same ideas. Skilled writers can produce creative, complete papers without the traditional thesis/three reasons structure. For these writers, imposing a formula on them will inhibit their natural creativity and lower their Style score. Formulaic writing can be a starting point, but it should not be the goal for all students or for all writing situations.

6. **What common mistakes result in low test scores?**

   - Straying from the focus or topic. Often, students may begin arguing a position, but then go off on a tangent that is not relevant to their paper.

   - Repeating the same words, ideas, and sentences.

   - Not writing enough to demonstrate competence in all components of the four domains. While a two-page paper does not guarantee a high score, an extremely brief paper virtually guarantees a low score.

   - Listing ideas without development and/or organization. Instead of developing a clear controlling idea with relevant supporting ideas and details, many students list one idea after another without any development or organization. Often the sentences of these papers could be rearranged in any way without altering the overall meaning of the paper.

7. **How strictly must the student's paper comply with the writing topic or prompt?**
While the paper must be a response to the prompt, the writer is allowed great latitude in how he/she chooses to respond. Writers may redefine the topic, choose a novel variation or fantasy approach to the topic, or negate the assertions contained in the prompt. For example, if the prompt directed students to write about whether peer pressure is helpful or harmful, students might redefine the issue to argue that it is the mass media (not other teens) who influence their decisions and actions.

8. **What if a student has no experience with a particular topic?**
If a student has no direct personal experience to draw upon, he or she can create an experience. A student may use a narrative as support for a particular position in persuasive writing. For example, a student could tell of the tragic, accidental shooting death of a neighbor, in order to advocate support for gun control, even if the student's neighbor has not been shot. Since the students do not have access to reference materials, they are not required to remember specific facts. As long as the "facts" support their position or fit in with the story, the students are not penalized if they are inaccurate.

9. **Is it better to play it safe, avoiding errors, or to take a risk?**
An error-free paper that contains simple words and sentences will receive a lower score than a paper in which more difficult words and sentences are attempted with a few errors as a result. Raters are trained to evaluate how much the student has demonstrated, not to count errors. The frequency and severity of errors are considered in the context of how difficult and sophisticated the word choice and sentences are.

10. **What if a student is not finished with his final draft when the time is up?**
Regular program students may be given up to ten (10) additional minutes to complete the test.

11. **What is the difference between reading to rate the Georgia High School Writing Test and evaluating student writing in the classroom?**
Raters read to apply a uniform set of standards established by the Georgia Department of Education. These standards are applied to a single writing sample for each student. Teachers, however, evaluate student writing using a variable set of criteria for each student which are applied to many writing samples. Teacher criteria vary according to what has been taught, how many opportunities students have had to learn the concept or skill, and how the teacher values these concepts and skills.

What Students Need to Know

Questions and Answers About the Georgia High School Writing Test

1. **Am I required to take and pass the writing test?**
   Yes, a passing score on the writing test is required in order to receive a Georgia high school diploma.

2. **When is the writing test given?**
   Your first time to take the writing test is in the fall of the junior year.

3. **What happens if I fail the writing test?**
   If you do not pass the writing test the first time you take it, you may pre-register to take it again in the spring of the junior year and also in the summer, fall, and spring of your senior year. You may continue to take the test at any scheduled administration after leaving school if necessary.

4. **How long do I have to complete the test?**
   Approximately 90 minutes.

5. **Do you have any advice as to how I can use my time most effectively?**
   Yes, the following suggestions may help you:

   Planning/Prewriting (15 minutes)
   Read the entire topic carefully. Read it a second time. Make sure you understand whether your purpose is to persuade, present a solution to a problem, or analyze the different sides of an issue. Think about some possible ideas you have about the topic. Plan your paper before you begin writing.

   Drafting (30 minutes)
   Organize ideas from your prewriting and begin writing your first draft. Re-read the topic to be sure you are writing about the required topic. Finish your first draft.

   Revising and Editing (25 minutes)
   Re-read the topic. Read and revise your first draft. Be sure to include enough support for your ideas.

   Final Draft (15 minutes)
   Copy your paper into the response booklet.

   Proofreading (5 minutes)

Proofread your paper for mistakes. Correct your mistakes neatly.

6. **Do I have to use ink?**
Yes, the final draft must be written in blue or black ink; however, the first draft may be written in pencil.

7. **What if I make a mistake using ink?**
Draw a line through what you want to change and rewrite it neatly.

8. **May I use a dictionary?**
No.

9. **Will spelling errors hurt my score?**
Frequent misspellings of common words or words in the writing prompt can prevent the reader from understanding your ideas and therefore could lower your score in the Conventions domain. Precise word choice is highly valued in the Style domain, and precise words help develop the topic, which is evaluated in the Content/Organization domain. Therefore, it is better to risk misspelling a precise word than to keep repeating simple, vague words. For example, instead of *walk*, *pace* is a better choice to show stress and worry, while *saunter* is a better choice to show a slow, leisurely walk.

10. **Will my handwriting hurt my score?**
If your handwriting can be read, it will not hurt your score. If your handwriting cannot be read, your paper cannot be scored.

11. **Am I required to write in cursive?**
No, you may print or write in cursive. If you print, use lower and upper case letters appropriately (rather than printing in all capital letters) to show you know the rules of capitalization.

12. **What score will I receive if I don't like the topic I am assigned and write about something else?**
You will receive a failing score. You must write on the assigned topic.

13. **What if I don't think the topic applies to me?**
Many of the writing topics require you to assume a hypothetical or "what if" role. For example, you might be asked to propose a new school safety plan when, in reality, your local school board and the parents have just decided that your school is safe without one. In order to demonstrate your writing ability, simply set your actual situation aside, use your imagination, and write about what you would propose and why if the school board were considering a plan to ensure that students are safe at school.

14. **What if I think I know little or nothing about the topic?**

Your paper is not evaluated for depth of academic knowledge about a topic or how accurate your facts are. You may make up facts or a situation, as long as your presentation is logical, coherent, and effective.

15. **If I write in rap, poetry or music, can I pass?**
No, you must write in prose (sentences and paragraphs).

16. **May I write in another language if that is easier for me?**
You must write in English to receive a score on the GHSWT.

17. **How long should my paper be?**
There is no set length. However, you have only two pages for your final draft. Be sure to cover your topic completely. Forty percent of your score (Content/Organization) depends on how thoroughly you develop your response. This means that several paragraphs will probably be necessary. Instead of asking "how long is this paper," raters ask "has this writer developed his controlling idea with relevant supporting ideas, major details, and specific examples and detail?" Obviously, a very short paper (a brief paragraph or two) is rarely considered complete.

18. **May I use "I" in my paper?**
Yes, if the first person point of view best addresses your topic. This is particularly true if you include a personal narrative.

19. **May I use "you" in my paper?**
Yes, but avoid using vague references.

20. **How will my paper be graded?**
It will be scored in four domains: Content and Organization, Style, Conventions, and Sentence Formation.

21. **What does Content and Organization mean?**
The composition is on the assigned topic and purpose. The central idea has sufficient details that relate to and elaborate the writer's points. The ideas are logically organized, clearly connected, and easy for the reader to follow. The paper is complete and makes sense.

22. **What does Style mean?**
The composition contains a variety of sentence types and vocabulary that make the paper interesting to read and make the writer's meaning easy to understand. The writer is aware of the intended audience and writes to that audience throughout the paper.

23. **What does Conventions mean?**
The rules of written English, including capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and formatting (paragraph indentions, margins, spacing of words, etc.), are observed. Subjects and verbs agree, and correct forms of nouns, verbs, and pronouns are used.

24. **What does Sentence Formation mean?**
The sentences in the paper are complete. Sentence parts are put together properly. Introductory words and phrases are used correctly. End-of-sentence punctuation is correct.

25. **Does one part of the test count more than another?**
Yes, the Content and Organization Domain counts 40%. The other three domains (Style, Conventions, and Sentence Formation) count 20% each.

26. **Who grades (rates) my test?**
All test raters have four-year college degrees and complete a 20-hour training program. Unlike your teacher, test raters do not know your name, your history, or your potential. They are not responsible for helping you improve your writing. Test raters have only one sample of your work, and they compare this sample to a set of guidelines established by the Georgia Department of Education. Because the testing situation does not provide you with time for extensive revision and editing, more emphasis is placed on ideas in your paper than your spelling, punctuation, and other components of grammar. Test raters look for the skills you have demonstrated in your writing rather than focusing on what you still need to learn.

Part Two: Foundations

History of the GHSWT

The 1991 General Assembly of the Georgia Legislature passed legislation mandating that the State Board of Education implement changes relating to the student assessment program. Portions of the Quality Basic Education Act (section 20-2-281) pertinent to the development of the high school writing test are reproduced below.

> Writing assessments shall be administered to students in grades three, five, eight, and 11. The writing assessments shall provide students and their parents with performance outcome measures resulting from the administration of such tests. The curriculum-based assessments that the state board shall develop shall measure student performance relative to the uniformly sequenced core curriculum approved for grades three, five, eight, and 11 by the state board pursuant to Code Section 20-2-140. The curriculum-based assessments shall place emphasis upon reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. All such curriculum-based assessments shall include process and application skills as assessed in a range of academic content, shall exceed minimum and essential skills by extending the assessments' range of difficulty, and shall emphasize higher-order thinking skills.

All students entering grade nine on or after July 1, 1991, are required to post passing scores on the writing test as one requirement for earning a high school diploma. Students take the writing test for the first time their junior year. The GHSWT was pilot tested in 1992 and field tested in the spring of 1993. It was given as a graduation requirement for the first time in 1994. Additional prompts were field tested in 1997.

The State Advisory Council on Writing Assessment assisted the Georgia Department of Education in developing the writing component of the student assessment program. This group, consisting of educators with expertise in the instruction of writing skills or writing assessment, was subdivided into a Grades Three and Five Committee and a Grades Eight and Eleven Committee. The council had two primary purposes. First, it provided advice to the Georgia Department of Education in matters relating to the plan of operation, ongoing developmental activities, administrative procedures, and test usage recommendations. In addition, the council worked in small committees to assist in developing writing standards, formulating scoring standards and procedures, and creating the **Assessment and Instructional Guide for the GHSWT**.

The **Guide** reflects the philosophy, test development contributions, and instructional insights of members of the Advisory Committee, working with two divisions of the Department of Education (Research, Evaluation and Testing and Curriculum and Instruction) and the contractor (Test Scoring and Reporting Services of the University of Georgia).

Philosophy

Reflecting the trends, tenets and position statements by standing committees of national organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, the Grades Eight and Eleven Committee of the State Advisory Council on Writing Assessment share these belief statements.

- Writing is a lifelong process.
- Writing matters well beyond the academic context.
- Writing instruction begins long before preparation for a statewide test.
- Writing instructors and students alike are lifelong learners.
- Writing is interdisciplinary. English/language arts teachers provide the "how to," while all teachers provide the essentials of "what to" write.
- The goal of teaching the writing process is to create writers who can carry themselves through the process.
- The writing process yields a product. In the classroom, both process and product can be evaluated. In assessment, the product alone is evaluated.
- Effective writing in all disciplines shares the same qualities. Writing is, thus, interdisciplinary in nature.

QCC Coverage in the Georgia High School Writing Test

The assessment is based on the following objectives from the Quality Core Curriculum. The objectives are listed first for the Core Skills and then for courses taught prior to the administration of the GHSWT.

QCC LA Objectives: Core Skills	Content Standards	Area of the Assessment
.9-12.4	Uses research process: selecting topic, formulating questions, identifying key words, choosing sources, skimming, paraphrasing, note-taking, organizing, summarizing, and presenting.	Content/Organization Domain
.9-12.6	Learns that words gather meaning from their context and carry connotation and denotation.	Content/Organization, Style, and Usage Domains
.9-12.8	Comprehends, develops, and uses specifics and generalizations.	Content/Organization Domain
.9-12.9	Acquires new vocabulary through reading and listening; demonstrates progress through speaking and writing.	Content/Organization, Style, and Usage Domains
.9-12.15	Writes Standard American English sentences with correct verb forms, punctuation, capitalization, possessives, plural forms and other mechanics, word choice, and spelling.	Sentence Formation, Usage and Mechanics Domains
.9-12.17	Uses language appropriate to situation and audience.	Style Domain
.9-12.18	Participates in the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing.	Test Administration Conditions
.9-12.19	Writes for many purposes including, but not limited to, personal (journals, diaries, stories, poems), social (friendly letters, thank-you notes, invitations), academic (themes, reports, essays, analyses, critiques), and business (letters, memos, and applications) writing.	Prompt Format and Type of Writing Assessed

QCC Coverage in the
Georgia High School Writing Test

QCC LA Objectives: American Literature and Composition	Content Standards	Area of the Assessment
Core Skills	As listed on previous page.	
.9-12.28	Recognizes different purposes and methods of writing; identifies a writer's tone and point of view.	Content/Organization and Style Domains
.9-12.35	Adapts words and strategies to various situations and audiences.	Content/Organization and Style Domains
.9-12.41	Writes in narrative, descriptive, persuasive, and expository modes with emphasis on exposition.	Type of Writing Assessed
.9-12.42	Adapts writing style to various audiences.	Style Domain
.9-12.44	Writes coherent, multiparagraph compositions.	Content/Organization Domains
QCC LA Objectives: Literature and Composition 09	**Content Standards**	**Area of the Assessment**
Core Skills	As listed on previous page.	
.9-12.35	Adapts words and strategies to various situations and audiences.	Content/Organization and Style Domains
.9-12.40	Writes in narrative, descriptive, persuasive, and expository modes of writing.	Types of Writing Assessed
.9-12.42	Writes for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, technical (process, explanation), business (letters of order, request, application, complaint), personal (journal, diaries, stories), social (friendly letters, thank-you notes, invitations) and academic (themes, reports, essays, analyses, critiques).	Prompt Format and Types of Writing Assessed

QCC Coverage in the

Georgia High School Writing Test

QCC LA Objectives: Literature and Composition 10	Content Standards	Area of the Assessment
Core Skills	As listed on previous page.	
.9-12.36	Presents arguments in orderly and convincing ways.	Content/Organization Domain
.9-12.37	Adapts words and strategies to various situations and audiences.	Content/Organization and Style Domains
.9-12.43	Participates in a writing process that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing with emphasis on revision.	Test Administration Conditions
.9-12.44	Writes in narrative, descriptive, persuasive, and expository modes with emphasis on persuasive writing.	Type of Writing Assessed
.9-12.45	Adapts writing style to various audiences.	Style Domain
.9-12.50	Writes for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, technical (reports, memos, charts), business (letters of complaint, orders, requests), academic (composition, essays, analyses), and personal (journals, stories, poetry).	Prompt Format and Type of Writing Assessed
.9-12.52	Uses the tools and resources of writers (e.g., specialized and general dictionaries, specialization manuals, thesauri, style manuals, and usage handbooks).	(not assessed)

QCC LA Objectives: Writer's Workshop	Content Standards	Area of the Assessment
Core Skills	As listed on previous page.	
.9-12.26	Adapts writing style to various audiences.	Style Domain

Georgia High School Writing Test

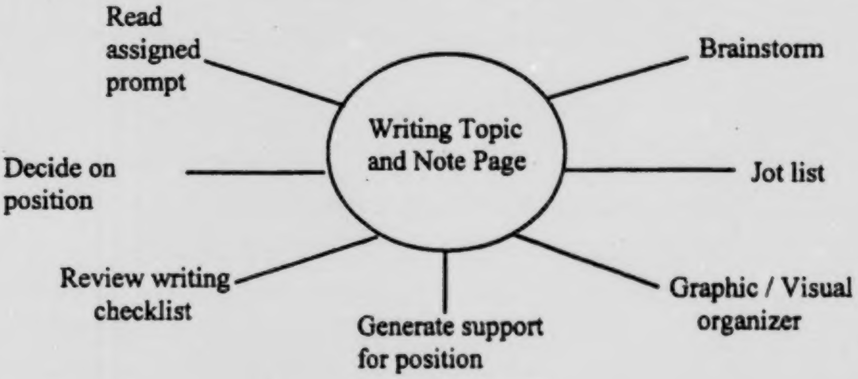
QCC LA Objectives: Applied Communication Lab I and II	Content Standards	Area of the Assessment
Core Skills	As listed on previous page.	
.9-12.26	Presents arguments in orderly and convincing ways.	Content/Organization Domain
.9-12.27	Communicates ideas clearly in writing.	All Domains
.9-12.30	Recognizes different purposes and methods of writing; identifies a writer's point of view and tone.	Content/Organization and Style Domains
.9-12.37	Recognizes that language is a powerful tool for thinking and learning.	Philosophy
.9-12.38	Writes for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, technical (reports, memos, charts), business (letters, orders, requests), academic (compositions, essays, analyses) and personal (journals, stories).	Prompt Format and Type of Writing Assessed
.9-12.39	Adapts writing style to various audiences, particularly those in the workplace.	Style Domain
.9-12.40	Learns the techniques of business and technical writing to appeal to and persuade others.	Type of Writing Assessed
.9-12.41	Is precise in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and other elements of manuscript form.	Usage and Mechanics Domains
.9-12.42	Improves personal writing by restructuring, correcting errors, and rewriting.	Administration Conditions
.9-12.43	Uses the tools and resources of writers (e.g., dictionaries, thesauri, style manuals, and usage handbooks).	(not assessed)

Part Three: Writing Instruction

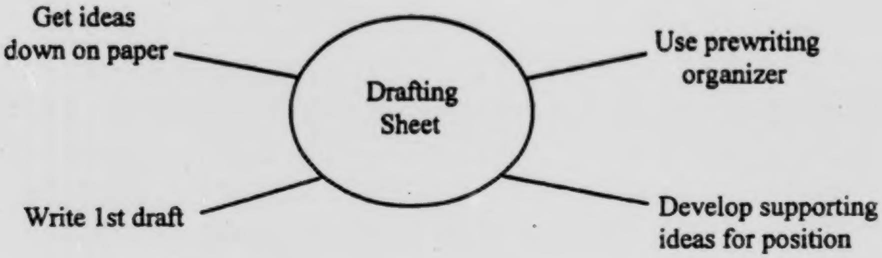
Structure Of The Georgia High School Writing Test

The Georgia High School Writing Test has four time periods or parts. The times given for each part are recommendations, not rules; if students finish any of the parts early, they may go on to the next part. Simulating timed writing in the classroom will help students understand how to pace themselves so that they complete each step of the writing process during the actual administration of the test.

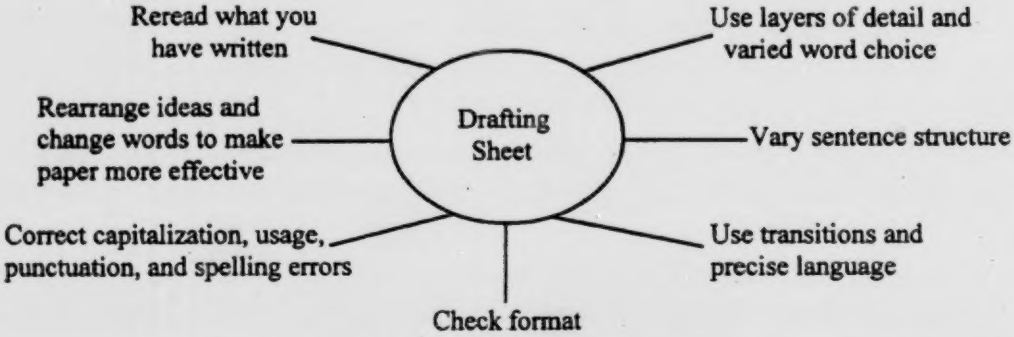
Part 1: Plan / Prewrite (15 minutes)


Read assigned prompt
Brainstorm
Writing Topic and Note Page
Decide on position
Jot list
Review writing checklist
Generate support for position
Graphic / Visual organizer

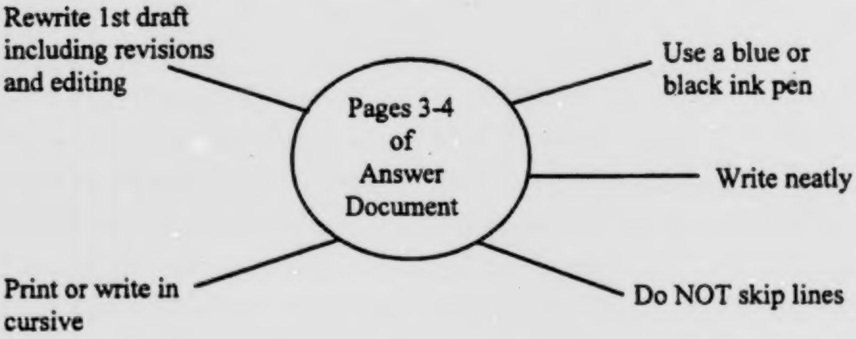
Part 2: Draft (30 minutes)


Get ideas down on paper
Use prewriting organizer
Drafting Sheet
Write 1st draft
Develop supporting ideas for position

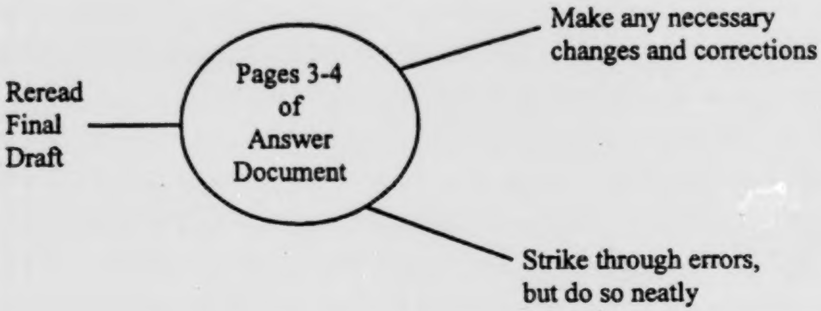
Part 3: Revise and Edit (25 minutes)


Drafting Sheet
Reread what you have written
Use layers of detail and varied word choice
Rearrange ideas and change words to make paper more effective
Vary sentence structure
Correct capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors
Use transitions and precise language
Check format

Part 4: Final Draft (15 minutes)


Pages 3-4 of Answer Document
Rewrite 1st draft including revisions and editing
Use a blue or black ink pen
Write neatly
Print or write in cursive
Do NOT skip lines

Part 5: Proofread (5 minutes)


Pages 3-4 of Answer Document
Reread Final Draft
Make any necessary changes and corrections
Strike through errors, but do so neatly

See Additional Resources at the end of the Guide for Blackline Masters of the graphics

Vocabulary for Students: Essential Terms

Teach your students the meaning of the following terms in the context of persuasive writing assignments so that they understand the requirements and expectations contained in the writing test topics. This list covers important terms in the writing process and vocabulary typically contained in the GHSWT prompts.

Writing Process

- Audience
- Brainstorm
- Development, well-developed, fully-developed
- Draft, rough draft, final draft
- Edit
- Jot list
- Organize
- Prewrite
- Prompt
- Proofread
- Purpose
- Revise
- Support
  - Levels of Supporting Ideas
  - Generalizations
  - Specifics
  - Relevance
- Task
- Topic

Persuasive Writing

- Advantages, disadvantages
- Agree, disagree
- Argument
- Benefit
- Convince, convincing
- Development of writer's position
- Explain
- Issue
- Opinion, point of view, viewpoint, position
- Personal narrative
- Persuasion, persuade, persuasive
- Positive, negative
- Problem
- Propose, proposal
- Purpose
- Recommendations
- Solution, ways to solve

Reading and Interpreting the Writing Prompt

1. Use the sample prompts in the Guide to make certain that students understand the format and purpose of the "Writing Situation" and "Directions for Writing." Encourage students to read the entire prompt before they begin prewriting.

2. Help students become aware that every prompt contains an **issue**, a **task**, and an **audience**. The **issue** and **task** appear under "Writing Situation"; the **audience** appears under "Directions for Writing."

   📖 , Page 6

3. To sharpen students' awareness of audience, have them experiment with writing for different audiences using the same topic. Different groups can write to different audiences and then share with the whole class to discover how audience determines the appropriate arguments.

Some students do not read the topics carefully and completely even though they are cautioned to do so. Papers based on an incomplete or incorrect interpretation of the topic receive low scores because they

- miscue on a single word or phrase
- misinterpret the issue
- fail to understand the purpose
- fail to address the issue
- fail to understand the task
- do not identify the audience

Each Writing Prompt is enclosed in a box that contains the **Writing Situation** and the **Directions for Writing**. Both sections must be read. The **Writing Situation** presents the **issue** and usually introduces the **purpose**. The **Directions for Writing** section presents the **purpose**, the **task**, and the **audience**.

It may be necessary to define the terms for your students as they are used in the context of the GHSWT.

Issue--the problem or subject of controversy

Purpose--to persuade, to propose a solution to a problem, or to analyze a controversial issue

Task--to develop arguments in support of your position, or to present a convincing solution to a problem, or to analyze the different sides of the issue

Audience--the readers who must be convinced that the writer's viewpoint deserves consideration

Directions to the Teacher. Reproduce this page as a handout for your students.

Writing Prompt, Number 2

Writing Situation

When your grades began to fall, your parents said that you would have to quit your part-time job. Because you must make your own car payments, this decision means that you will not be able to keep your car. You are concerned that you will get upset if you try to talk to your parents. Instead, you decide to write them.

Directions for Writing

Write your parents a letter in which you try to convince them that you should be given another chance to improve your grades without giving up your job and car. Make your argument clear, complete, and convincing.

1. Read Writing Prompt, Number 2 silently.
2. (A) What is the purpose of this prompt?
    - persuasion
    - problem solving
    - analysis of an issue

   (B) How can you tell?
3. Who is the audience you are writing to in Prompt 2?
4. In one sentence, explain what your paper is going to be about. (What is the issue?)
5. What is your task in this paper?

Annotated Sample Writing Prompts

The next four pages of Guide illustrate a variety of ways you might show students how to read and think about the writing prompts. This page contains unmarked copies of the prompts so that you can reproduce them as handouts or overheads for your students. Select the level of explanation that is most appropriate for your students.

Writing Prompt, Number 3

Writing Situation

Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throwaway" generation. As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials. The students in your civics class have studied ways to solve the waste problems in your school. They identified the problems in your school environment and considered alternative ways to reduce the quantity of waste. As spokesperson for the class, it is your job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support their recommendations.

Directions for Writing

Write an editorial for the school newspaper in which you present the alternative solutions for reducing the quantity of solid waste in your school environment. Try to persuade your readers to support the proposed program. Include reasons, examples, and evidence to convince the readers to agree with your position.

Writing Prompt, Number 4

Writing Situation

Advancements made in health care have resulted in people living longer. Many Americans now live well beyond the age of 65. The older generation consists of people with various experiences, talents, and expertise. Many of these senior citizens have retired from the workforce and can now use their talents in the service of their community. Think of how your community could benefit from the contributions of these older Americans.

Directions for Writing

Write a paper to be presented at a meeting of the city council in which you describe your ideas for using the talents and expertise of senior citizens. Convince the city council that your community would benefit from using the services of senior citizens. Provide concrete evidence and supporting details.

How to Read and Understand a Prompt: The Writing Situation

(for the General Audience of Students)

Directions to Students

Read the entire Writing Prompt (all the words in the Writing Situation and in the Directions for Writing) before you do anything else. You must read the complete topic to know the issue or general subject, the purpose, and the audience.

[Broad background context for the topic of solid waste. Background context is designed to help you understand the issue. It is not necessary to include it in your essay. If you do not understand the background context, keep reading to get the issue.]

initial statement of the issue

Writing Prompt, Number 3

Writing Situation

[Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throwaway" generation. As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials.] *The students in your civics class have studied ways to solve the solid waste problems in your school. They identified the problems in your school environment and considered alternative ways to reduce the quantity of waste. As spokesperson for the class, it is your job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support their recommendations.

the audience

further explanation of the issue

*This sentence establishes a familiar setting for the problem: a class in your school. Even though you may think, "I don't take a civics class," you are asked to imagine that the students in your civics class have studied the problem.

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How to Read and Understand a Prompt: Directions for Writing

(for the General Audience of Students)

Directions to Students

Read the entire Writing Prompt (all the words in the Writing Situation and in the Directions for Writing) before you do anything else. You must read the complete topic to know the issue or general subject, the purpose, and the audience.

restatement of the issue

Directions for Writing

Write an editorial for the school newspaper in which you present the alternative solutions for reducing the quantity of solid waste in your school environment. Try to **persuade your readers to support the proposed program**. Include reasons, examples, and evidence to convince the readers to agree with your position.

Your task: reminder to support and develop your ideas

Your purpose: to present a convincing plan for solving the problem of solid waste in your school.

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How to Read and Understand a Prompt: The Writing Situation

(for Students with Limited English Proficiency)

The Writing Situation gives the background for the writing assignment. It will be several sentences long. It is important that you read both the Writing Situation and Directions for Writing all the way through at least once before you go back to try to figure out difficult words and ideas.

Sentence 1
Introduces the topic using an author who wrote about the way our society throws too much away. (If you can't understand this sentence, go on to the next one.)

Sentence 2
Tells how throwing away so many things has caused a trash (waste) problem in most areas. This is the problem created by our habit of throwing too much away.

Writing Prompt, Number 3

Writing Situation

^{1}Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throwaway" generation. ^{2}As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials. ^{3}The students in your civics class have studied ways to solve the solid waste problems in your school. ^{4}They identified the problems in your school environment and considered alternative ways to reduce the quantity of waste. ^{5}As spokesperson for the class, it is your job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support their recommendations.

Sentence 3
Even though this sounds like a statement of fact and you may think, "this did not happen in my civics class," you need to understand that you are asked to imagine that the students in your civics class studied this problem. Use your experience in high school courses you have taken.

Sentences 3,4, and 5
Connects the problem of too much trash to the local school. Tells what you are supposed to do to help solve the problem.

Words that might be unfamiliar are circled. Add them to your vocabulary.

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How to Read and Understand a Prompt: Directions for Writing

(for Students with Limited English Proficiency)

The Directions for Writing tells what you are supposed to do for your writing assignment. It usually contains 2 to 3 sentences.

Sentences 2 and 3

Reminds you to give many examples and ideas so that your readers will agree with you.

Directions for Writing

[1] Write an editorial for the school newspaper in which you present the alternative solutions for reducing the quantity of solid waste in your school environment. [2] Try to persuade your readers to support the proposed program. [3] Include reasons, examples, and evidence to convince the readers to agree with your position.

Sentence 1

Tells you to write an editorial which is a lot like a persuasive essay. Explain your ideas for reducing the trash at your school. (If your school does not have a newspaper, imagine that it does.)

Words that might be unfamiliar are circled. Add them to your vocabulary.

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Student Worksheet on Understanding Prompts: The Writing Situation

Directions: Read both the Writing Situation and Directions for Writing carefully and then explain each of the sentences and words identified below.

The purpose of sentence 1 is to

____

____

____

Sentence 2 gives more ____________

____

____

____

Writing Prompt, Number 4

Writing Situation

[1] Advancements made in health care have resulted in people living longer. Many Americans now live well beyond the age of 65. [2] This older generation consists of people with various experiences, talents, and expertise. [3] Many of these senior citizens have retired from the workforce and can now use their talents in the service of their community. [4] Think of how your community could benefit from the contributions of these older Americans.

Sentence 3 further ____________

____

____

____

Sentence 4 asks me to ____________

____

____

____

Student Worksheet on Understanding Prompts: Directions for Writing

Directions: Read both the Writing Situation and Directions for Writing carefully and then explain each of the sentences and words identified.

A paper is a lot like a ____________

____

____

____

A "meeting of the city council" means that my audience

____

____

____

Directions for Writing

Write a paper to be presented at a meeting of the city council in which you describe your ideas for using the talents and expertise of senior citizens. Convince the city council that your community would benefit from using the services of senior citizens. Provide concrete evidence and supporting details.

"expertise of senior citizens" is another way of saying

____

____

____

____

Concrete evidence means

____

____

____

____

Reflection: When I take the writing assessment, I must remember ____________________

____

____

____

Steps of the Writing Process

Prewriting

Once the student understands the writing topic, the next step is to come up with meaningful ideas to allow the student to write a well organized essay. The use of a jot list can be beneficial in generating ideas and helping writers discover what they know about a topic. The following list is more extensive than any one student would create. It is provided to illustrate that a jot list on the same topic may suggest the structure of a comparison/contrast essay to one writer, while another writer may find the beginnings of a personal narrative, and another student could discover a single line of argument that can be fully developed.

Prewriting is the first step in the writing process and is a critical step in producing a well-written paper. Prewriting involves collecting, listing, and organizing ideas to use in writing a paper.

Collecting information includes brainstorming and jot-listing. The next part of the process involves organizing the listed details. The following are examples of graphic/visual organizers:

Venn diagrams
Clustering/Webbing/Mapping
Herringbone diagrams
Branching
Outlining

Note: Examples of these may be found in the teacher resource materials that accompany most language arts texts.

See Additional Resources, in the Blackline Masters at the end of the Guide, for informal prewriting outlines

Teacher Guided Brainstorming

The teacher picks a topic, and students call out supporting and related ideas. The teacher then leads students through grouping related ideas and eliminating irrelevant ones.

See Additional Resources, Jot List Activity, in the Blackline Masters at the end of the Guide

Drafting

Drafting is getting the writer's ideas on paper. Prewriting/planning should be the guide for drafting. The purpose of drafting is to discover the writer's thoughts, position on the issue, and how to express those ideas.

The first draft should be written quickly with the focus on content and organization. If students are having trouble writing an effective beginning, tell them that it is acceptable to write the introduction and conclusion after the rest of the paper has been written.

Revising

Revising is the step in the writing process in which the writer improves the paper. During this step, the writer makes sure that all of the important points about the subject are made and that the reader can understand all of the ideas. Sentence variation, layers of detail, transitions, precise language, varied word choice, openings, and endings should be considered in the revision process.

# **Effective Ways to Open a Paper:**

Surprising fact or quotation
A question about the issue
Dialogue
Introduction of main points
Quotation
Dramatic moment

# **Effective Ways to End a Paper:**

Statement of opinion
Resolution of controversy
Call to action
Presentation of solution
Use of famous quotation

Revising Strategies:

Peer conferencing should occur before teacher conferencing. Peers listen to the writer's text and then ask questions. The questions help the writer revise for clarity.

# **Teacher conferencing** is extremely important. Point out what has been done correctly before identifying areas that need improvement. In addition to marking the errors on the student's paper, the teacher should sit with the student and explain what the student can do to improve

his/her writing. Have the student explain (rather than read) what was written. The student may have thought that he/she had included details that were not actually written in the story. The student can then go back and make the suggested revisions.

Revising Checklist - CRAM

1. Do I need to **Cut** any information?
    - Have I stuck to my topic?
    - Have I repeated myself in some parts?
    - Have I included only details that support the position?
2. Do I need to **Rewrite** any parts?
    - Are there ideas or sentences that are unclear?
    - Have I used persuasive techniques?
3. Do I need to **Add** any information?
    - Do I have a good beginning?
    - Have I included all the important details, specific examples, or facts?
    - Do I have an effective ending?
4. Do I need to **Move** any parts?
    - Are my sentences in the best order?
    - Do any ideas or details seem to be out of place?

# Have the students **list words that begin sentences**. If every sentence begins with the same or similar words, suggest other ways to begin sentences.

# Have the students **count the words in each sentence** of their papers. The numbers illustrate the length of the sentences. If all the sentences contain approximately the same number of words, the students need to work on varying the length of their sentences.

# When writers leave out important information, the teacher **separates (cutting and pasting) the writer's sentences**, leaving ample space for the writer to insert information or to elaborate on the ideas.

# Clean up the **MESS**

Movability: rearranging sentences/ideas so that they are in the proper order.
Expansion: providing additional details, ideas, and examples to make the paper complete.
Sentence Combining: joining short sentences/fragments to form longer, effective sentences.
Sliding: replacing over-used words with more precise, descriptive words.

# Have the students **highlight the first sentence** in each paragraph to check for logical organization. Provide the class with highlighters.

## Editing

During the editing step, the writer corrects any mistakes made in spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. Attention should also be given to format, including paragraph breaks, dialogue, margins, spacing between words, and handwriting.

Editing Strategies:

# **CUPS** (Capitalization, Usage, Punctuation, Spelling):

The teacher marks the appropriate letter in the margin next to the line in which the error occurs. The students must locate and correct their mistakes.

# **Editing Checklist**

Capitalization

- Did I start each sentence with a capital letter?
- Are all proper nouns (names of people and places) capitalized?

Usage\Word Choice

- Did I use strong action words (*sprint, smash, leap*) ?
- Did I use precise descriptive words (*fluffy*, *wrinkled, bitter*)?
- Did I use the correct word (*son/sun* or *there/their/they're* or *buy/by*)?
- Did I use the correct form of verbs?
- Do all the subjects and verbs agree in number?

Punctuation

- Did I use correct end punctuation after each sentence?
- Did I use quotation marks correctly?
- Did I use commas correctly?
- Did I punctuate dialogue correctly?
- Did I use apostrophes correctly?

Spelling

- Have I spelled every word correctly?
- Have I used hyphens correctly?

Proofreading

Proofreading is the last step of the writing process, the final polishing and cleaning up of a piece of writing before its presentation. Before proofreading, the writer should have completed the earlier stages of the process: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. During proofreading, the writer does a final check for errors in omitted or repeated words, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Student Guidelines for the GHSWT

Content/Organization Domain

1) My paper is on the assigned topic and makes sense.
2) My paper has a clear purpose and can be followed smoothly and easily.
3) I have included specific details related to the topic.
4) The beginning of my paper is interesting.
5) At the end, my paper feels finished and makes the reader think. My ending avoids repetition of the beginning.

Style Domain

1) I know why I'm writing and for whom I'm writing.
2) My sentences begin in a variety of ways.
3) My language is specific and creates pictures in the reader's mind.
4) My paper includes simple, compound, and complex sentences.
5) I have not repeated my words and phrases.
6) I have expressed my opinions in words that clearly indicate my personality and that are appropriate for the audience.

Conventions Domain

1) I have used capitals correctly.
2) Almost every word is spelled correctly. There is sufficient meaning in the context of my paper to "know" any word I might have misspelled.
3) I remembered to indent each paragraph.
4) I have observed the correct rules for usage:
    - subject-verb agreement
    - correct pronouns
    - correct noun and verb forms
5) I have used internal punctuation correctly:
    - commas
    - colons
    - semi-colons
    - apostrophes

Sentence Formation Domain

1) My sentences include a complete subject and a complete verb, and they express complete ideas.
2) I used periods, question marks, and exclamation points in the right places.
3) I used coordinate and subordinate conjunctions correctly.
4) I used logical word order.

Student Writing Checklist

Get ready to write.

Q Read the entire topic carefully.
Q Decide what the topic requires you to do.
Q Think about what the people who will be reading/rating your paper expect.
Q Read the topic again.
Q Make a list of ideas or create a graphic organizer.
Q Organize your list and eliminate the ideas that do not fit.

Help your reader understand you.

Q Clearly state the point you want to make.
Q Use enough specific and related details to make your point.
Q Present ideas in a clear and logical order.
Q Move smoothly from one idea to another.

Make your paper interesting.

Q Use descriptive, precise, and concrete words.
Q Use simple, compound, and complex sentences.
Q Vary your word choice.

Make your final paper easy to read and rate.

Q Write fully-developed paragraphs.
Q Indent each paragraph.
Q Use connecting words correctly.
Q Write in complete and correct sentences.
Q Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly.
Q Write or print legibly in blue or black ink.
Q Make corrections neatly.

Part Four: Scoring

GHSWT Scoring Rubrics

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION DOMAIN. The writer establishes the controlling idea through examples, illustrations, facts, or details. There is evidence of a sense of order that is clear and relevant.

- Response to assigned task
- Clearly established controlling idea
- Sufficiently relevant supporting ideas
- Clearly developed supporting ideas
- Clearly discernible order of presentation
- Logical transitions and flow of ideas
- Sense of completeness

A score of "1" in Content/Organization is assigned to a paper so lacking in development and organization that a controlling idea is not clear in the reader's mind. Rather than responding to the assigned task, the writer may do little more than repeat key words and phrases from the writing prompt. The paper may be limited to a statement of the writer's position on an issue or may reveal that the writer was too confused to support any aspect of the issue. Absence of a plan, a preponderance of irrelevant ideas, or incomplete information may leave the reader confused.

A score of "2" in Content/Organization is assigned to a paper that has a vague, poorly developed response to the assigned task. The paper may contain several apparent controlling ideas, none of which is sufficiently developed. Supporting ideas may be few, general, or undeveloped. There is not enough information in the paper as a whole or within parts of the paper to provide a sense of completeness. Although an organizational plan may be clear, the same ideas are repeated again and again.

A score of "3" in Content/Organization is assigned to a paper that has a clear controlling idea established and developed through generally relevant supporting ideas. The text may occasionally stray into ideas that do not directly support the controlling idea. Supporting ideas are generally presented in a logical order. Enough support for the writer's position is presented for the paper to be considered complete. Development may be uneven, with some parts of the paper fully elaborated and others only partially developed. When the organization of the paper is not strong, the abundance of relevant support keeps the paper in the "3" range.

A score of "4" in Content/Organization is assigned to a paper that has a strong, clear controlling idea established through relevant supporting ideas, each of which is fully developed. The support (examples, illustrations, facts, details, logic, appeals to emotions, opinions) is presented in a clear and logical manner, with effective transitions. The paper contains full, complete information. The reader accepts the validity of the writer's assertions, even though the reader might not be convinced to agree with the writer's position on the issue.

GHSWT Scoring Rubrics

STYLE DOMAIN. The writer controls language to establish his or her individuality.

- Effective diction
- Varied and effective sentence structure
- Tone consistent with topic and purpose
- Sense of audience

A score of "**1**" in Style is assigned to a paper that does not demonstrate the writer's individuality. Word choice (diction) is repetitive and often imprecise. Sentence structure is repetitive. The tone of the paper is flat, or otherwise inappropriate for the audience and persuasive purpose. The paper appears to have been written in a vacuum, with no awareness that it was to be directed to a particular audience. The paper may be too brief for the writer to demonstrate his or her writing style.

A score of "**2**" in Style is assigned to a paper that demonstrates little individuality. Word choice is generally simple and ordinary; while correct, the language is not engaging. Sentence structure varies little if at all. The tone of the paper may be inappropriate for the audience or persuasive purpose. If appropriate, the tone is not sustained throughout the piece of writing. The overall impression is that the writer lacked a consistent understanding of "who" would read the paper.

A score of "**3**" in Style is assigned to a paper that provides the reader with a sense of the writer's individuality. Overall, diction is engaging, and at times precise. Effective word choice may be repeated rather than varied. Sentence structure is varied. If repetitive, repetition is done for effect. The tone is appropriate for the writer's topic and purpose. The paper is written to a clearly recognizable audience.

A score of "**4** in Style is assigned to a paper that provides the reader with a clear sense of the writer's individuality. The language is precise, vivid, and varied, revealing the writer's awareness of the denotative and connotative power of words. Alternate, varied sentence structures reinforce the different use of language. The tone is not only appropriate, but sustained throughout the paper. The overall impression is that the writer was fully aware of both "what" needed to be said and "how" to say it for the audience to respond to the writer.

GHSWT Scoring Rubrics

CONVENTIONS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE DOMAIN. The writer uses the conventions appropriate for standard American written English.

-Appropriate usage
-Appropriate mechanics

A score of "**1**" in Conventions is assigned to a paper that does not demonstrate a sufficient grasp of standard American written English. The paper usually contains severe and repeated errors in usage and mechanics. The errors create a barrier to comprehension of the writer's ideas. Or, if generally correct, the paper may be so extremely brief that it contains too few correct instances of each component to demonstrate the writer's competence.

A score of "**2**" in Conventions is assigned to a paper that generally demonstrates a minimal grasp of usage and mechanics with repeated weaknesses in the writer's command of standard American written English. The paper usually contains a combination of simple, correct forms and incorrect instances, indicating the writer's mixed competence in the domain. The writer may show some competence in one of the components but fail to include enough instances to move the paper out of the "**2**" range.

A score of "**3**" in Conventions is assigned to a paper that demonstrates control in many aspects of usage and mechanics. Errors do not interfere with meaning, either because they are infrequent or minor. Lack of variety of the many different aspects of usage and mechanics keeps the paper in the "**3**" range.

A score of "**4**" in Conventions is assigned to a paper that demonstrates a full, consistent command of usage and mechanics. The writer demonstrates competence in a variety of instances and a variety of contexts. While the paper may contain a few errors, they seem to occur as a consequence of the first draft assessment context.

GHSWT Scoring Rubrics

SENTENCE FORMATION DOMAIN. The writer forms sentences correctly.

- -Appropriate end punctuation
- -Complete sentences or functional fragments
- -Appropriate coordination and/or subordination

A score of "**1**" in Sentence Formation is assigned to a paper that does not contain clear, complete sentences with appropriate end punctuation. Fragments and/or run-ons may occur frequently in the paper. The writer's ideas run together. Sentence level errors interfere with meaning, or there may be so few sentences, that competence cannot be determined.

A score of "**2**" in Sentence Formation is assigned to a paper that demonstrates minimal competence in forming complete sentences, connecting sentences, and joining the elements within sentences. The paper may contain a mixture of correct and incorrect sentences. Or, the writer may fail to demonstrate competence in coordination and/or subordination. The paper may contain too few sentences to demonstrate competence beyond a minimal level.

A score of "**3**" in Sentence Formation is assigned to a paper that contains a majority of clear and complete sentences with generally correct end punctuation. The various elements within the sentences are joined correctly, and the sentences are connected properly. Competence in either coordination or subordination is adequately demonstrated. Subordination, when present, may be limited to simple clauses. There may be occasional instances of fragments, run-ons, or run-together ideas, but these are outweighed by clear, correct sentences.

A score of "**4**" in Sentence Formation is assigned to a paper that contains consistently clear, complete sentences. End punctuation is correct. The various elements within the sentences are joined correctly, and sentences are connected effectively. Although there may be an occasional loss of control (ideas that run together) or a nonfunctional fragment, competence in subordination and coordination is demonstrated. Often, the paper assigned a "**4**" demonstrates a variety of subordination strategies.

Student Responses That Cannot Be Scored

In order to be scored, papers must meet the criteria contained in the scoring rubrics for the four domains. **It is not possible for a student to pass the writing assessment unless the student's paper is scored in all four domains**. The following types of responses cannot be scored in any domain:

Blank

Non English

Illegible

Incomprehensible

Copied/Not original writing

Nonprose

Practiced Paper on Topic from Previous Test Administration

Nonparticipation

Too Limited Text to Score

In addition, a response that is **Off Topic** (one that is not written on the topic contained in the writer's prompt) will receive scores in only two of the four domains, Conventions and Sentence Formation. A paper that is scored in only two domains cannot receive a passing score.

Part Five: Sample Prompts

Writing Prompt, Number 1

Writing Situation

The issue of censoring or banning books has received much national attention. Recently, however, the controversy became a local issue when parents in your community objected to a book that their teenager had obtained from the high school library. The parents' campaign to have the book removed permanently from the library has aroused mixed reactions from students, teachers and other parents. Decide how you feel about the issue of banning books.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper in which you either defend a parent's right to have a book banned or oppose such a ban. Clearly state your position. Try to convince readers of the paper to agree with you by providing well-developed supporting arguments.

Writing Prompt, Number 2

Writing Situation

When your grades began to fall, your parents said that you would have to quit your part-time job. Because you must make your own car payments, this decision means that you will not be able to keep your car. You are concerned that you will get upset if you try to talk to your parents. Instead, you decide to write them.

Directions for Writing

Write your parents a letter in which you try to convince them that you should be given another chance to improve your grades without giving up your job and car. Make your argument clear, complete, and convincing.

Writing Prompt, Number 3

Writing Situation

Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throwaway" generation. As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials. The students in your civics class have studied ways to solve the waste problems in your school. They identified the problems in your school environment and considered alternative ways to reduce the quantity of waste. As spokesperson for the class, it is your job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support their recommendations.

Directions for Writing

Write an editorial for the school newspaper in which you present the alternative solutions for reducing the quantity of solid waste in your school environment. Try to persuade your readers to support the proposed program. Include reasons, examples, and evidence to convince the readers to agree with your position.

Writing Prompt, Number 4

Writing Situation

Advancements made in health care have resulted in people living longer. Many Americans now live well beyond the age of 65. The older generation consists of people with various experiences, talents, and expertise. Many of these senior citizens have retired from the workforce and can now use their talents in the service of their community. Think of how your community could benefit from the contributions of these older Americans.

Directions for Writing

Write a paper to be presented at a meeting of the city council in which you describe your ideas for using the talents and expertise of senior citizens. Convince the city council that your community would benefit from using the services of senior citizens. Provide concrete evidence and supporting details.

Writing Topic, Number 5

Writing Situation

A parent group from our school opposes the use of calculators in mathematics classrooms. The group argues that students "don't know how to add and subtract anymore" because they rely on calculators instead of doing the math operations by hand. This group plans to approach the school board to ask that the use of calculators be forbidden in all math classrooms. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the parent group.

Directions for Writing

Write a paper that will be read by the school board in which you clearly express your position on the use of calculators. Try to convince the board members to agree with your position using well developed arguments.

Writing Topic, Number 6

Writing Situation

In the past, our country has required young men to serve in the Armed Forces. While military service is no longer required, some people believe that both young men and women between the ages of 18-35 should be required to complete at least two years of community service. Think carefully about your position on required community service.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to be published in your local newspaper explaining your position on the issue of required community service. Include reasons and evidence that will convince your readers to support your position.

Writing Topic, Number 7

Writing Situation

The issue of social promotion has been widely debated. Elementary students are sometimes placed in the next grade, even though they have not performed successfully in the lower grade. Some experts believe that keeping children in one grade for two years may damage their self-esteem. Other experts believe that promoting a student who is not academically prepared is unfair to the student. Your school board is considering the social promotion issue. What do you believe?

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the school board that clearly states your beliefs about the practice of social promotion. Try to convince the board to agree with your position by including reasons and examples that support your argument.

Writing Topic, Number 8

Writing Situation

For generations, critics have complained about the influence music has on young people. Yet music continues to be an important part of a teenager's life. What music is appropriate for teens?

Directions for Writing

Write a speech to these critics explaining the type or types of music that you consider appropriate for teens. Present a well-developed argument.

Part Six: Student Writing Samples

Student Paper Annotations and Teaching Tips

Introduction

This section of the Assessment and Instructional Guide for the GHSWT includes sample student papers (written in response to a variety of writing prompts), annotations explaining the scores, and teaching tips. The papers are arranged by Writing Prompt Number (See pages 51-54). You will find several student papers written in response to each prompt. Teaching tips for improving student writing are included where appropriate. Papers are identified by the writing prompt number followed by the sequence number. For example, the first sample student paper written in response to writing prompt 2 is identified as "Paper 2 - 1." The writing prompt number and a descriptive phrase are included in the heading that precedes the annotations. After each prompt set of papers you will find the scores and explanations.

Dear Editor,

I am really concerned about the controversy that is going on in our community. Some parents have complained to our school library about having a book banned. I think this is unfair and should be resolved in another manner.

Ever since I was in elementary school, I have been making regular trips to our county library. As a child, I was very interested in experiencing with all types of books. Then as the years went by I began to read books that were more complex. This resulted in my wandering over to the adult section and the other sections which contained books that you had to decide whether or not you were ready to read them. As you probably know, some of these books can have some extremely vulger things in them.

One day when I went into the library, I saw this very inviting book that was also very misleading. The book had something to do with sex, but I could not see that from the title or the illustrations on its cover. It was also placed in the children's section, and it did not have an adult sticker on it. It was so inviting that I checked it out.

Afterwards, I left the building and went to the car. Then my mother noticed the cover of the book. She asked to see it, because she thought it was going to be a good book. When she opened it up she discovered something different, though. So, back we went into the library to speak

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with the librarian.

We discussed the different sections and the books that were in the library. I also learned about something new. I found out that our library had young adult books. Apparently, the book that I had chosen was out of place.

The next time I went to the library there was a new section. It was the young adult section. It was off limits to children under the fifth grade.

I know that all books can't be categorized completely, but most libraries do try to label them so that you will know what you're getting. Maybe our library should do that instead of banning books. We should have a section for books that lets you know what they're mainly about so that you can make your own decision of whether or not you would want to read them. Then those students whose parents object to those books can stay away from them.

Sincerely,

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Editor,

As a parent, you are set as the final authority over your children. You know what is best for them And you try to help them grow to be their best. As a parent myself, I must strongly argue that I should be the final judgement over what my children read and when they read it. I do not want my children subjected to any type of book that contains any language or scenes that I do not approve of. All parents have set different rules and morals for their children and there is no way to please everyone. But at the same time, we as parents want to protect our children from any unneccesary profanity, language, and types of sexual scenes that may be found in some of these books. Our children see enough of this on t.v. and on the streets without bringing it into the schools too. There is no possible way that every parent can go to the school library and read through every book to make sure that he or she approves of it. Yet we can ban the books that may be questionable. Certain children may not be mature enough to handle what is available in some books, or they may not be mature enough to distinguish right from wrong. As parents, we are here to help them make these decisions until they are able to make them on their own. Some parents may not be bothered by the actions found in some

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in the books and that is their choice, but meanwhile, other children, who may not be able to handle it, are also being subjected to these same actions. If you, as a parent, feel that your child is mature enough for these certain books. I have no problem with that, but I do have a problem with these same books being available to my children.

As a parent, many people agree that we do not want books available to our children that may be questionable in moral standards. Our job as parents, is to watch over our children, teach them, help them, and protect them from harmful things..., so please let us do our job.

Sincerely,

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Dear Sirs:

The act of parents censoring or banning books from a school library should not happen. By the time students get in highschool and become responsible young adults they are well prepared to choose their own reading from the school library.

If students don't like a particular book, and many agree, it would be justice to ban the book. Students need to learn as much as possible while they are in school so they can be prepared for whatever future they may have. Sometimes reading certain books will help them understand. Books that go around a subject may not help the student understand a book that tells what is happening may be more efficient for a student.

Parents who believe they should have the right to ban certain books from the school library should think of their children first. They should talk to their children. Parents should ask their children what they think of the issue. Many times the children are overlooked. Although the parents are banning the books for their children than keeping them from learning from reading.

Many students who are offended by a certain book will not read it. Students who are interested may read the book with a different understanding and not be offended at all. This is another reason parents should not be able to ban or censor books.

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Students have different learning interests. A book one student finds interesting may be offensive or dull to another.

Parents and teachers should not be able to ban books from the school library. It should be the students choice to ban books. After all, it will be the students who will read the books. Parents should be concerned with the values they need the teach their children instead of banning learning material from a library. Parents should give their children the right to choose what they read. People will only learn from a book they have chosen to read that interest them. Let the students make the choice.

Sincerely

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Im writing to you about the develepments in the school. About the banning of the books Well I have to say I dont agree with the parents on this subject And I will tell you exactly why. some of the books are great works of art and some students might want to read them. The one book that has aroused so much attention is a very good book. I have read it myself. Why they wount to get rid of it is unusual. I know I would want my kid to read it Because it is so good. I want my kids to have the best education as possible and school is the only place that can do that unless we take all the books away.

I remember awhile back a man didnt like the book his son was reading so he went to the school and raised cain over it. The only thing that happened that day is that he went to jail. That didnt solve any thing But he wasnt about to give up He still tried to get the book banned. And He still failed. Not enough parents would back him up.

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Well enough about that. I believe that banning a bock is just like burning one and its saying to me That The bock is wrong and is not to be read. Their has also been preatchers tell me no to read ceartin book

I also remember when som women tried to ban Huck Finn and other classics as this. They were trying to get rid of the some of the worlds greatest novels. Never in my life had I heard such bull. But this is the world to day.

Well I just wanted you to know how I Felt on the subject And I hope that you feel the same way

I don't think that there is any reason why books should be banned. If a teenager picks out a book from the High School library they should be able to read it. I think it is the teenagers choice. I'm sure if the teenager did not want to read it they wouldn't have checked it out.

I am sure the school library's have decient books that aren't too bad for the children to read. I really don't think they would put anything that bad in the library. If they have any thing on sex or aids I think the children should learn about it.

Yes, there are some books that are too much for children to read but I'm sure they would not put it in the library in the first place. No book should be banned because the author took alot of time and hard work to write it for us.

I know the parents are tring to protect their children from things like that but if it were me and I wanted to read a certain book and my parents took it away and tried to get it banned, I would be mad. Because it was my choice. And as I said before I don't think they would put any thing in the

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library if we couldn't read it.

Books are very important for reasearch and entertainment. If somebody came along and banned a book you needed how do you think you would feel. Every book is important to somebody.

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Writing Prompt, Number 1: Book Banning

Paper 1 - 1

Content/Organization Score: 3
The writer uses a personal narrative to support an alternative to banning books in school libraries. Supporting ideas are relevant and logical and there is enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching tip: Often the difference between a score of "3" and score of "4" in Content/Organization is a matter of the number of specific details the writer includes in the paper. This response in evenly developed, but could have been improved if the writer had elaborated more on the incident at the library. The writer could have included the title of the book involved, some details about what the mother found objectionable, and suggestions for categorizing books for younger readers. The controlling idea is clear to the reader without these details, but they could move the development of the paper from merely complete to full.

Style Score: 3+
Overall, diction is engaging ("resolved," "complex," "misleading," "extremely vulgar"), but there are also lapses into functional language ("We should have a section for books that lets you know what they're mainly about so that you can make your own decision of whether or not you would want to read them."). Sentence structure is varied. The tone is consistently one of sincere concern. The writer demonstrates consistent control of all the components of Style except word choice.

Conventions Score: 4
The writer demonstrates a full, consistent command of both usage and mechanics. Occasionally a comma is missing after an introductory clause or included unnecessarily. The writer demonstrates competence in a wide variety of instances and contexts of each component of this domain.

Sentence Formation Score: 4
The paper contains consistently clear, complete sentences. End punctuation is correct. The elements within the sentences are joined correctly. The writer includes a variety of both coordination and subordination strategies ("I know that all books can't be categorized completely, but most libraries do try to label them so that you will know what you are getting." "One day when I went into the library, I saw this very inviting book that was also misleading." "Ever since I was in elementary school, I have been making regular trips to our county library.").

Paper 1 - 2

Content/Organization Score: 3
The student takes the point of view of a parent. The controlling idea is clear (Parents should have some input into what books are available in the school library). Supporting ideas are relevant and logical. Enough information is presented for the paper to be considered complete but not full.

Style Score: 4
Word choice is generally engaging ("Our job as parents is to watch over our children, teach them, help them, and protect them from harmful things . . . so please let us do our job."). Tone is especially effective and consistent throughout the response as the student takes the position of a parent determined to protect his child from harm and bad influences. The writer uses several techniques to draw the audience into the argument ("We, as parents," "As parents, we . . . ," "If you, as a parent . . . ," "Our job"). The writer clearly understands how to convey an emotional message to his audience.

Conventions Score: 3
The paper demonstrates control in most of the components of usage and mechanics. Paragraphs are not formatted, but this does not interfere with meaning. Lack of variety keeps the response in the "3" range.

Sentence Formation Score: 4
Sentences are consistently clear and complete. End punctuation is correct. Competence in coordination and subordination is demonstrated in a variety of instances ("All parents have set different rules and morals for their children and there is no way to please everyone." "As parents, we are here to help them make these decisions until they are able to make them on their own." "There is no possible way that every parent can go to the school library and read through every book to make sure that he or she approves of it.").

Paper 1 - 3

Content/Organization Score: 2

Although the controlling idea is clear (Parents should not be allowed to ban books from the school library), it is only minimally developed. Most of the supporting ideas are limited to generalities like "sometimes reading certain books will help them understand" and "Parents should be more concerned with teaching their children than keeping them from learning from reading." There is not enough development to provide a sense of completeness.

Style Score: 2

Word choice is generally simple and ordinary in this response ("This is another reason parents should not be able to ban or censor books."). There is little sentence variety; the writer uses a noun or pronoun to begin most sentences. ("They should talk to their children." "Parents should ask their children what they think of the issue."). The repetition of "should" detracts from the writer's tone.

Teaching tip: The flow of this paper is interrupted by repetitive sentence structure and word choice. Varying sentence beginnings, substituting pronouns or synonyms for commonly used words (students, parents), and using varied subject-verb constructions would improve this writer's style.

Conventions Score: 3

The writer demonstrates control in many components of usage and mechanics. Subjects and verbs agree. Nouns and verbs are formed correctly (except "interest"). Spelling, capitalization, and formatting are correct. Missing internal punctuation and the lack of variety in pronoun and verb forms keep this paper in the "3" range.

Sentence Formation Score: 3

The majority of sentences are clear and complete. End punctuation is correct. The writer demonstrates competence in subordination but not coordination.

Paper 1 - 4

Content/Organization Score: 2

The controlling idea (books should not be banned) is clear but poorly developed. Supporting ideas are vague and general. In the first paragraph, the book in question is never identified by name. The anecdote, "the man who tried and failed to get a book banned," but not developed or linked to the writer's position. The incident involving the book Huckleberry Finn is mentioned but not developed. Organization is weak. There is not enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching tip: It is not necessary for the writer to explicitly state how each supporting idea relates to his controlling idea. However, this student does not comment or extend the supporting examples at all, so it is unclear how the examples were intended to advance the writer's position. The paper reads as if the writer just included much of what he had ever heard of about book banning rather than trying to organize his ideas into a cohesive argument. Details that would have provided a sense of completeness are missing. The writer needs practice in focusing on a controlling idea and developing that idea with specific examples and details.

Style Score: 2

Word choice is correct but generally simple and ordinary ("Well I just wanted you to know how I felt on the subject."). The language is not engaging to the reader. The tone of the paper is either flat or inappropriate ("Never in my life have I heard such bull."). There is some variety in sentence structure but little sense of audience.

Teaching tip: The writer needs practice in controlling language to both express his point of view toward the topic and to convince his audience with logical and emotional appeals. Experimenting with the components of the Style domain first in shorter paragraphs before moving to the control of language throughout an entire paper could be effective. Effective word choice is important.

Conventions Score: 2

The writer demonstrates minimal competence in the components of mechanics and usage. Usage is stronger than mechanics, as most subjects and verbs agree and are formed correctly (except "Their has also been preatchers tell me no to read ceartin book"). The paragraph breaks and spelling are correct. Many apostrophes are missing in contractions.

Sentence Formation Score: 2

The paper contains a mixture of correct and incorrect sentences. End punctuation is often missing. Many sentences begin with "and," "but," or "because." The writer is only minimally competent in joining the clauses within sentences.

Paper 1 - 5

Content/Organization Score: 2

The controlling idea (Books should not be banned) is clearly established. However, there is very little development. Supporting ideas are listed or repeated. The only points made by the writer are that:

- Teens should be able to choose what they read.
- The library wouldn't have a book that isn't decent.
- Children should be able to read about sex and AIDS.
- The author put a lot of time into the book.
- The writer would be mad if his parents wouldn't let him read a book.
- Books are important for research and entertainment.

While these ideas build support for the controlling idea, they are not developed enough to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching tip: Most students need help in understanding the difference between listing ideas and developing them. Brainstorming writing ideas together as a class can give needed practice in generating more ideas. Categorizing the types of ideas from general to specific reminds students to include specific details in their writing. Useful exercises include narrative examples, hypothetical situations, logical arguments, and extended reasons as ways of supporting the writer's position.

Style Score: 2

Word choice is correct but simple and ordinary ("I am sure the school library's have decient books that aren't too bad for the children to read."). The writer does occasionally attempt to engage the reader with a rhetorical question ("If somebody came along and banned a book you needed how do you think you would feel?"), but the majority of the paper demonstrates only minimal control of language.

Conventions Score: 2

While relatively error-free, the usage and mechanics are too simple and too repetitive to move the paper beyond the "2" range. Unclear pronoun reference and missing commas after introductory clauses do not create a barrier to understanding the writer's ideas.

Sentence Formation Score: 3

The majority of the sentences are clear and complete with generally correct end punctuation. There is one fragment and one sentence beginning with "and." The writer demonstrates competence in subordination ("If they have anything on sex or aids I think the children should learn about it." "If somebody came along and banned a book you needed how do you think you would feel.").

Dear Mom and Dad :

This is just a letter to discuss with you the fluctuation I have had in my grades on the last grade report. I will now present to you four major points on how I can keep my job and grades at a satisfactory level. I now ask that you read and consider my points with a open mind to each one of them.

My first major point is that a job teaches me good leadership qualities, responsibility, respect for my co-workers and also my superiors. A job is also good because it helps me to pay for my car which therefore relieves you all from supporting me monetarily. I will also for lesser hours at work to relieve this burden from me. This is just on point I have thought of to help remedy this situation.

My second point is that I will study and try harder to raise my grades up. This can be ~~[illegible]~~ accompulished by me studying at work in every free opportunity I get. A Also I can apply myself more to school work and less to my job. I will also ask my teachers for any special help if I need any extra help. These are ~~Just~~ just two ideas I have thought of to remedy this situation. Here are two more ideas I have also thought of to help the situation as it now stands.

My third point is that I have never done anything to betray your confidence as my parents in my sixteen years of life. This is nothing more than a minor ~~step~~ stepping stone in my journey along life's path way once again. I ask you to let me keep my job while I strive harder and

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harder to raise my grades up. I promise that if I do not raise my grades by the next ~~of~~ grading period upon reciept of my report card I will then quit my job

My fourth and most important point is that I still have appraxamately 5 weeks to raise my grades and I will do that. I just ask that you as show your leniency and mercy upon me in this matter as you my Mother and Father make the final decision on this matter. I also know that not having good grades is a very grave and drastic matter which will be corrected by me immediately

In Summation I ask that let me keep me job while also correcting the problem at hand. I will correct this problem. Again I thank you for your consideration and swiftness in this matter of my grades and job. I will now leave you with all of the points I have presented. I know that you will read this letter with an open mind and open heart. I will be happy and abide by whatever decision you all give me. Again I thank you for your ~~estimation~~ consideration in this matter.

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I have decided to write you this letter so you can better understand my point of view. I realize my grades have fallen, but it is not because of my part-time job. I guess I have not been working as hard a I should. I feel that you are using my job as an excuse for my failing grades. My job in no way interferes with my school work. If anything my job makes me more responsible. The reason my grades have fallen is because I have not been applying myself.

If you let me keep my job, I promise to work harder. This job not only has taught me to be responsible, but it has taught me a lot about life. I realize now how important it is to maintain my grades, and hold a job. I realize that school is more important. I should take my grades more seriously from now on.

I propose a plan. If my grades do not improve within the next month, I will quit my part-time job. I am convinced that I can pull my grades up. As I have said before, I do not think my grades are the problem.

There is another aspect I think you have overlooked. If you make me quit my part-time job, I will no longer be able to afford my car payments. I really have worked diligently to keep

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my car, and now I must give it up too. This job has taught me a lot about being self-sufficient. When I earn money it is not like I go off and spend it on clothes. I work hard to earn make my car payments. I feel as though all my hard work has gone to waste. I do realize that my grades are more important, but giving up my job (in my opinion) is just not the answer. Without my car I can't go anywhere. It just means more work for you. All I ask is that you give me one more chance.

Give me one month to pull up my grades. If I do pull up my grades, then I keep the job. If I do not, then I quit. I hope you will agree with me. I am sincere in what I say. I hope you will take into consideration everything I have said.

Mom and dad, I know my grades are not the best in the world. Compared to what they used to be. Taking away my job and car will not improve them. If my job is interfering with my ability to do well in school I will do my best to study a little harder and have my hours at work cut back so that my grades will be brought back up. Remember that if I quit my job I will not be able to pay for my car and will have to return it. Then you both will have to take me back and forth to the places I need to go. Which means getting up earlier in the morning to take me to school or being late for your own job. Concidering that my grades are still good and passing. I have have a chance to pull them up. I think that I should be able to keep my job. A job has great benefits for the future just as school does. They both prepare you for the future, but a job offers a few more things. My job alone helps me to meet all kinds of people and see what the real working world is like. I also have my own money to spend and do not have to go about doing odd jobs to get cash. Nor do you have to supply me with money to get clothes or go out on the weekends. All of those reasons seem to help out in a time when money is short and I want things. You have to admit it does help. Also you see the down side of the way my grades have fallen. I see that I've just gotten use to handling both a job and school and feel that if given a little more time I can pull my grades up and bring my works hours slowly back to normal. I am pretty sure that if we all sit down and discuss this like adults that we will be able to come up with something other than quiting my job. To give you a few more reasons why not to quit my job besides my car and losing cash which does help out. If I quit my job and lose my car I am no longer able to take my sisters the places they need to go. Nor will I be able to do those small errands which I am often asked to do right after school and also I will not be able to get you places if something happens to your car. Now that would be a real shame. So now that I have confronted you with the facts I will let you ponder them for a while. Think through all of the details carefully and remember every one of them counts. Your disicion could make or break a good situation and I promise that if the grades do not come up by Spring Quarter at school I will cut my hours back to only Weekends. Thank you for listening. Your loving daughter.

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My plan is to Improve my by better organization. I well make a daily schedule on a calinder to remind me what I have to do. I well cut my hours so, I make just enouf money for the car payment. I well start Comeing in earlyer so I can get in bed and be fresh the next day.

The schedule I well keep well be on a pocket calinder that I well carie with me. It well tell me when to start to study, when to stop, as well as other things. If I have other things in my life to come up I well have to be disapled enough to do my studys first.

I well talk to my boss about cutting my hours to make enouf money for my car payment. I donot think there will be a problem after I tell him why. Cutting back on my hours will give me more time to study and ge homework done.

Comeing in earlyer well help me be ready for the next day. It is a fact that people that sleep and eat right think and

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reason better. I think Keeping my car is more inportant that staying out late.

I hope the plan I have come up with is suffiecent. I think if I work real hard and believe in myself I can get my life in order. Then I wont have to worry if I am going to pase or fail, I be making grate grades.

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Dear Mom and Dad

I Knew that my grades have been falling for the past copy of weeks. But the job is not the problem the reason my grades are falling is because of me. When I come home from work the only thing I want to do is lay in my bed and talk to my friends on the phone or go outside and play basketball. But seeing how much my education means to you. I plan to start doing better in my school work like doing my homework at home rather than at the school rushing to get done not know or even caring if it's right or wrong, and I also plan to start studying harder for my tests.

All I ask is that you let me keep my job and if by next report card my grades don't improve I will quit my job on my own.

Advising is one way to get better grades in school, But another way is by going to night school and Keeping my partime job that way also, and so after school I won't have to lose my car, ~~butat~~ by night school I Can work the day full-time and not worry about parttime job and still keep the car.

And study more at home when I get off work and put more time in school than I in the job that I have after school, Eventually night school would be the most eventually thing to do than day school any way.

By going to night school I can still keep my grades up and payments on my car. Or just by working some day's after school and not everyday and my grades will improve and then I wont have to worry about anything. Maybe by finding another job that won't Keep me late.

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When my grades began to fail my parents told me they thought I would have to quit my part-time job at Winders. If I lost my job I would lose my car, house and I couldn't make payment on them. I wouldn't have know money for food.

My mom thought I need to quit Because my grades were failing. I was working to lat on week night. I wasn't get to school on Time and I would sleep in my class.

If i didn't have a job I couldn't make my payment on my house an cars. If the car payment is not payed they get the car.

When I quit the job i would have know food in the house to eat on. My mom would have to support me with money, food, and a good cook. If not I would have to quit school and state back working.

When my grades began to fall my parent told me. they thought I would have To quit my part-Time at Windeer, I told my mom I couldn't quit I had a car, house and need food and had to make payment on Them. I didn't want to lose Them.

Dear Mother,

I know my grades are falling. Can you give me another chance? If I am made to quit my job then I'll have to sell my car. If I do not have a car then I'll have to drop out of school. None of my friends have cars and it will be a snowy day in July when I ride the bus.

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Writing Prompt, Number 2: Letter to Parents about Improving Grades

Paper 2 - 1

Content/Organization Score: 4
The paper has a strong, clear controlling idea (I understand the problem and I can correct it). Each supporting point (benefits of the job, how to raise grades, I can be trusted, I have a time frame to work with) is fully developed with specific examples. The writer makes it very clear that he understands his parents' concerns by addressing each one. Although the transitions are simple ("my first major point," "my second point," "my third point," "my fourth and most important point"), they do link the parts of the paper.

Style Score: 4-
With the exception of transitional phrases, word choice is precise and varied ("I have never done anything to betray your confidence as my parents in my sixteen years of life."). Sentence structure is varied. The tone of sincerity is sustained throughout the paper. The writer consistently controls the components of Style to engage the audience.

Conventions Score: 3
The writer demonstrates control in many components of both usage and mechanics. Subjects and verbs consistently agree. Errors are infrequent and minor in spelling ("responbility," "approxamately," "reciept," "sumation," "accompalished") and word choice ("by me studying," "lesser hours"). Occasional missing words are probably proofreading errors.

Sentence Formation Score: 4
Sentences are consistently clear and complete. End punctuation is correct. Both coordination and subordination are demonstrated in a variety of instances.

Paper 2 - 2

Content/Organization Score: 3-

The controlling idea is clear (I can maintain both my grades and my part-time job) and developed with relevant supporting ideas. Development is somewhat uneven; there is not as much explanation of how the writer will improve his grades as there is explanation of the benefits of working. There is just enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching tip: The writer provides specific information about the benefits of working (making car payments, buying clothes, learning to be self-sufficient) but does not explain how he will improve his grades. Instead of simply stating that he will work harder to improve his grades, the writer should provide details about how he will accomplish this (such as developing a study schedule, spending more time on homework, seeking help from other students or a tutor). This additional information is needed for the writer's position to be evenly and fully developed.

Style Score: 3

Word choice is engaging ("I realize now how important it is to maintain my grades, and hold a job."). Sentence structure is varied. The tone of sincerity is sustained through the paper. The writer addresses the parent (audience) directly several times in the text ("If you let me keep my job, I promise to work harder."). This technique draws the audience into the situation as if being included in the dialogue.

Conventions Score: 4

The writer demonstrates a full, consistent command of both usage and mechanics. Singular and plural subjects and verbs consistently agree ("If my grades do not improve, I will quit my part time job."). Pronoun reference is clear ("This job not only has . . ., but it has . . ."). Spelling is consistently correct ("responsible," "maintain," "propose," "diligently," "sufficient," "consideration"). Although some commas are missing after introductory clauses, internal punctuation is generally correct (including "part-time").

Sentence Formation Score: 4

The paper contains consistently clear, complete sentences with correct end punctuation. Strong competence in both coordination and subordination are demonstrated, and the elements within sentences are joined correctly.

Paper 2 - 3

Content/Organization Score: 3
The controlling idea is clear, although the argument may not be what the reader was expecting. The writer does not focus on presenting strategies for improving grades. Instead, the writer describes all the ways the family will be inconvenienced without the help of an "extra" driver. The student does offer to study a little harder. This is an acceptable approach to the prompt and constitutes a position. There is enough information presented to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching Tip: Although this GHSWT writing prompt designates an audience, it is rarely as specific as the writer's parents. In brainstorming writing ideas, it is useful for the class to practice thinking of all the different groups of people who might be affected by the issue presented in the writing situation. This should help in generating all sides of the issue at hand as well as generating more supporting ideas.

Style Score: 3
Diction is generally engaging ("interfering with my ability," "concidering that," "handling both a job and school," "confronted," "ponder") with occasional lapses into functional language ("still good," "a few more things," "all kinds of people," "pretty sure," "a few more reasons"). Sentence structure is varied enough to be interesting, but many sentences begin with "I" or "If I quit my job . . ." The tone and sense of audience are strengths of this paper. The audience is the writer's parents, so the writer emphasizes how each point will affect them ("Think through all of the details carefully and remember every one of them counts."). This technique, reinforced by the language the writer uses to engage his parents, engages and draws in the audience by involving them in the situation.

Conventions Score: 3
The writer demonstrates more control in the components of usage than mechanics. Subject-verb agreement is strong and nouns and verbs are formed correctly. In mechanics, spelling is good, but many commas are missing and paragraphs are not formatted. Capitalization is limited to the beginnings of sentences. These errors and lack of variety keep the paper in the "3" range.

Sentence Formation Score: 3
The majority of sentences are clear and complete. End punctuation is correct. Although there are two sentence fragments, the writer demonstrates competence in both subordination and coordination.

Paper 2 - 4

Content/Organization Score: 2+
While the plan is sufficient, development of the supporting ideas is not complete. Information in the first sentence of each body paragraph has already been stated in the introduction. The remainder of each body paragraph consists of two sentences of relevant, but general, elaboration. Specifics are missing. The conclusion includes some new information but not enough to move the paper out of the "2" range.

Teaching Tip: It is not necessary or advisable for the writer to announce in the first paragraph of the paper all salient points that support the writer's position. Some writers might benefit by practicing writing introductions and conclusions that analyze the problem presented in the writing situation rather than announcing their intentions. When time allows, many experienced writing teachers advise their students to write the introduction after completing the body of the paper.

Style Score: 2
Word choice is correct but simple, ordinary, and repetitive ("I will start coming in earlyer," "Coming in earlier will help me be ready for the next day."). The "I well" subject-first form is overused in sentence construction. The tone is sincere, but there is little sense that the paper was written for an audience.

Conventions Score: 2
The response illustrates the potentially misleading effect of one aspect of one component of the Conventions domain. Clearly, the writer cannot spell. However, there is minimal competence demonstrated in paragraph formatting, internal punctuation, and subject-verb agreement. Missing words in the first and last lines are proofreading errors.

Sentence Formation Score: 3
While this paper contains a majority of clear and complete sentences, the writer uses the same sentence structure repeatedly. Competence in subordination is adequately demonstrated. A wide variety of sentence formation strategies is not demonstrated.

Paper 2 - 5

Content/Organization Score: 2
The controlling idea is minimally developed (Working harder can improve my grades by not rushing, by caring, and by studying for tests, and spending less time talking on the phone). Supporting ideas are listed and there is no elaboration. There is not enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Style Score: 1
Brevity limits the evidence of competence in all components of Style. Word choice is correct but simple and ordinary. There are not enough sentences to demonstrate a variety of structures. Although the writer does indicate some awareness of audience ("But seeing how much my education means to you . . ."), the paper is too brief to achieve minimal competence.

Teaching tip: Although there is no set length that guarantees a good score on the GHSWT, extremely brief papers will rarely achieve minimal competence in any domain. One paragraph responses rarely offer enough instances to demonstrate the writer's abilities. It appears that this writer does have some grasp of the components of Style. Timed practice writing tests in the classroom could allow the writer to pace himself in order to write longer, more engaging papers.

Conventions Score: 1
Brevity limits the opportunity for the writer to do enough in mechanics and usage to overcome the errors. Additionally, what is done correctly is simplistic.

Sentence Formation Score: 1
There are very few complete sentences in this response. Two sentences start with "but," and several are run-ons. There are not enough correct sentences to grant minimal competence.

Paper 2 - 6

Content/Organization Score: 1
The response appears to be a list of solutions with no beginning, end, or focus. The writer begins by stating that he could go to night school, work full time in the daytime, and thus afford to keep his car. Later he suggests not working every day after school to improve his grades or maybe finding another job. None of the supporting ideas are developed, and there is no organization of ideas.

Teaching Tip: This writer does not demonstrate the ability to write a focused complete paragraph. Pre-writing with jot lists and graphic organizers may help the writer focus his ideas into paragraphs and, later, more complete essays. The writer needs to know that the prompt does not serve as an introductory paragraph.

Style Score: 1
The writer does not demonstrate control of any of the components of Style. Word choice is repetitive and imprecise. The tone is flat ("And study more at home when I get off work and put more time in school than in the job that I have after school.") There is no sense that the paper was written to an audience.

Conventions Score: 1
The writer does not demonstrate even a minimal grasp of standard American written English. Competence is not demonstrated in any of the components of mechanics or usage. While spelling, capitalization, and subject-verb agreement are correct, the rules are simple. There is mixed evidence of paragraph format, and no evidence of control of internal punctuation, varied noun and verb forms, and clear pronoun reference.

Sentence Formation Score: 1
Sentence level errors interfere with meaning. There are only three complete sentences in the paper. The other sentences are either fragments or run together ideas. Sentences often begin incorrectly with "and," "but," or "or."

Paper 2 - 7

Content/Organization Score: 1
Although the topic of the paper is clear, the writer does not establish a controlling idea. The same two ideas are repeated again and again in the response (If I quit my job I would lose my car and my house, and I wouldn't have enough money for food). There is not enough development of any of the ideas to warrant minimal competence in this domain.

Style Score: 1
The response is not written to an audience; it is a list of "what would happen if." Word choice is repetitive and imprecise. Sentence structure is repetitive. The tone of the paper is nearly flat. The writer does not demonstrate competence in any of the components of Style.

Teaching tip: The writer needs to understand writing for a reader. It is not effective stylistically to repeat the exact wording of a sentence several times in the paper. This is a problem with some formulaic writing techniques which also limits the Content/Organization score due to repetition of ideas. Students need to reread their essays during the editing/revising portion of the GHSWT to check for repetition in word choice and sentence structure. An effective conclusion must do more than repeat verbatim the words of the opening.

Conventions Score: 1
The response does not demonstrate a minimal grasp of standard American written English. There are errors in every component of both usage and mechanics. Much of what is done correctly is simplistic or repeated in each paragraph. The paper contains too few correct instances of each component to demonstrate the writer's competence.

Sentence Formation Score: 2
All of the sentences in the response are correctly formed. The writer demonstrates subordination in the majority of his sentences. End punctuation is correct. Brevity (limited instances) keeps this score in the "2" range.

Paper 2 - 8

Content/Organization Score: 1

The response is limited to a statement of the writer's position on the issue of his falling grades. The writer does not develop the position or establish a controlling idea.

Style Score: 1

Although the writer's point of view toward riding the school bus is clear, because the paper is so brief, there are not enough instances of the components of style to demonstrate even minimal competence. The audience is left wanting much more. Sentence variation is the strongest component.

Conventions Score: 1

The response is so brief that it contains too few correct instances of each component to demonstrate minimal competence. What is done correctly is very simple.

Sentence Formation Score: 1

While the five sentences are correctly formed, they provide scant evidence of the ability to form effective sentences with coordination and subordination.

In our school community, we are producing much unneeded waste. The trash we produce daily is outrageous. Don't be fooled by the fact that just because we can't see the trash anymore, it just disappeared. After school, all the garbage is taken from the school premises and taken to the local landfill. But our landfill is becoming trash-full! We need to cut back on the throwing away and disposal of so much stuff. The students of Mrs. Jones' third period civics class have come up with three simple ways in which we can reduce the threat of trash. After all if we don't start now who will start it and when?

One simple thing those who bring their lunch to school can do, is buy a school lunch! No I'm just kidding, but instead of packing your lunch in a paper sac, go get a lunch box or borrow a piece of tupperware from your mom's eighty-piece collection. The saving is simple. The bag must be thrown away, while the box or tupperware may be used forever.

Another little job to keep waste low is for those of us who drink canned or bottled beverages. The Earth Club has set up dozens of collection sites all through the school for aluminum cans and glass bottles to be recycled. This would ensure the cans and bottles to be reused and not just dumped into the ground.

The last topic we in the civics class would like to

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bring to your attention is the one which unlike the first two involves everybody. Everyday here at school, thousands of sheets and pieces of paper get thrown away. Now maybe if we recycle it we wouldn't have such a big pollution problem. To produce paper, trees must be cut. Trees supply the world with oxygen and granted so do flowers, but lets not try to see if the plant population can support the human race. Not only is a tree a vital part of a daily process, but the Earth is the only home we have yet. We can't just pack up and move. So let's keep the trees and reuse all that paper. This last step to conserving waste is an extremely easy task that students and teachers alike can engage.

All people in the world should take up these simple little tasks, but let's be the ones to start it. Let's take pride in our school, community and especially, our home!

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To the readers of today, the students of our civics class are trying to solve the solid waste problems in our schools and environment. As spokesperson for the class, I ask that you as parents and fellowmen to them, help support their recommendations. Now to tell you what solutions, and ways you can help to solve this problem.

The solutions are to many get rid of this unnecessary garbage. Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, referred to modern society as the "throwaway" generation. We need your support to make our society a betterway generation.

The ways to handle these waste materials are by building garbage disposals and provide places to recycle or dispose them. The way to do that is for us to work as team in a together manner.

I'm presenting alternative solutions to you today to help the students as well as the community solve this environmental problem. It is up to us to help supply the needed resources. To those of you who realize that our society is going to the dumps, I present this article so we can help get it back up. We want our society to look nice and smell nice.

This article is to make you think twice, lets support our class's program recommendations. Just take a look at your environment today, we have nothing lose but the waste.

In conclusion, I have suggested ways and solutions to solve the solve this solid waste problem, it up to us, (the community) to get the job done.

Thank you,

Spokesperson:

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Dear student body and administration. I'm representing my class as Spokesman for our proposed solution in cutting down on all the solid waste around our school. There are many way's in which you can cut down on all the solid waste. We've come up with a few idea's that our school can benfit from we think.

One of the way's I think we can help with this problem is collecting all the hundred's of pound's of paper throw away. There aught to be two trash can's in every classroom. One for can's, food, + other item's. The other for paper and things of that nature. There aught to be something built, so the janitor's can put this paper in. The paper then can be carried to where it can be recycled and Used again.

Another way that we think can cut down on this is solid waste issue, is in the lunch room. We're used to drinking from card-board milk carton's. One idea is [illegible] that instead of drinking from milk cartons drink from plastic, or glass cups This way all you do is wash them and You want have any milk carton's to worry about. This will cut down on the milk carton's and the dispossable of them.

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These are just a few of the way's we think that can help with the pollution problem in school's. Think about these few way's of reducing solid waste. Were still trying to come up with new way's to improve our enviroment.

Sincerly,

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As locations for garbage disposal fill to capacity, communities are faced with the problem of handling waste materials. In our school we studied ways to solve the solid waste problems in our school We have a place in our school for the waste materials.

We have garbage can for our can, (like coke can) I think we have our waste materials problem over control. There are people here to clean the mess up and they do a good job.

It is our job to persuade your school's student body and administration to support the class's recommendation. We all have to help and keep the communities clean.

We have a clean school system. Thank to the people that clean it. Some school are not as clean as our school. We have some clean communities too. We do not have a bad waste materials problem

Some states have a bad waste problem such as New York.

In fact, people should have clean-up to the earth. They used to throw the junks to the ocean or the ground. The men who works with the earth and they are helping to save animals inside the water or the outside. Some people don't care about these animals but if they die then they will be thier fault. But they will realize how earth is important and will try to save the whole earth.

Some people rides the ship or boat and they have to watch carefully for the oil because sometimes, the oil from the boat or ship could make the animal sick or die. The men who works with the ships or boats to make sure everything is done but they check on oils to make sure it allways stays inside. if they see the oil in the water, they will have to save animals for as long as they can. Some people can help them with these animal and if they find out how had it was then, they will have to take the water out to try to make the water clean so the animal can be save. After they save them, they will be as happy as they can be. But if thes people does it again then the men will be mad and will have a speech to make people listen.

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People just don't care and they have to understand how earth important was. Someday, they will understand how the earth is special.

Writing Prompt, Number 3: Reducing Solid Waste

Paper 3 - 1

Content/Organization Score: 4
This paper has a strong, clear controlling idea ("The students of Mrs. Jones third period civics class have come up with three simple ways in which we can reduce the threat of trash.") established through relevant supporting ideas (buy a lunch box, recycle cans and glass, recycle). Each of these ideas is fully developed and is presented in a logical manner. Transitions are effective ("One simple thing . . . Another little job . . . The last topic we in the civics class would like to bring to your attention . . ."). The information presented is full and complete.

Style Score: 3+
The writer's individuality is revealed through the use of humor ("borrow a piece of tupperware from your mom's eighty-piece collection"). There is a strong sense of audience ("if we don't start now"), and the persuasive tone is appropriate and sustained ("Let's take pride in our school"). Sentence structure is varied. While the writer's individuality and sense of audience are strong, the writer often uses ordinary language which is sometimes imprecise ("We need to cut back on . . . the disposal of so much stuff" "Not only is a tree a vital part of a daily process, but the Earth is the only home we have got" "an extremely easy task that students and teachers alike can engage").

Conventions Score: 3
Usage is generally correct, with the exception of a subject-verb agreement error ("the one which, unlike the first two, involve everybody") and a pronoun agreement error ("All people in the world should take up these simple little tasks, but let's be the ones to start it") where the singular it refers to the plural antecedent tasks. Punctuation is generally correct, with the exception of one missing apostrophe ("Mrs. Jones third period civics class"). Formatting is effective. A few words are spelled incorrectly ("disapeared," "sac," "especialy").

Sentence Formation Score: 4
This paper contains consistently clear, complete sentences. The writer demonstrates competence in both coordination ("Not only is a tree . . ., but the Earth is . . .") and subordination ("After all, if we don't start now, who will start it and when?"). Although a few sentence flaws are present, these are outweighed by the abundance of correct sentences and the sophistication of the subordination and coordination strategies.

Paper 3 - 2

Content/Organization Score: 2-
At first glance, this paper seems better than it is. While the bulk of the paper tries to persuade "parents and fellowmen" to help with the waste problems, there is virtually no argument that the problem is serious and the proposed plan is the answer. The plan is limited to ". . . building garbage disposal and provide places to recycle and dispose them." The writer does not provide support for the position, and there is not enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching Tip: This writer has done little more than establish a position on the issue. Posting a writing checklist of the elements of persuasive writing (introduction to the issue, position, supporting ideas, conclusion, etc.) could help this student (and others) write a more complete essay.

Style Score: 2
Word choice is generally correct but ordinary ("society to look nice and smell nice."). The writer does attempt a persuasive tone, but what is effective is repeated. Sentence variation is limited; most sentences repeat the subject-first structure. The writer does not demonstrate more than minimal control of the components of Style.

Conventions Score: 3
Subjects and verbs agree in this paper and correct pronoun reference is demonstrated. Spelling is correct and the paper is formatted appropriately. Internal punctuation is mixed. The writer demonstrates correct instances of commas to separate introductory elements, and subordinate clauses. There are some unnecessary commas, missing commas, and a missing apostrophe. Errors do not interfere with meaning. Lack of variety and mechanics errors keep the paper in the "3 range."

Sentence Formation Score: 3-
Most of the sentences on the first page are correctly formed and punctuated. On the second page, the writer demonstrates less control, fusing six sentences into three ("This article is to make you think twice, let's support our class's program recommendations.") However, the majority of sentences are clear and correct, and competence is demonstrated in simple forms of subordination.

Paper 3 - 3

Content/Organization Score: 2+
The writer effectively addresses the assigned prompt (Writing Prompt, Number 3: Reducing Solid Waste) and proposes a solution. However, the controlling idea is only minimally developed. Two supporting ideas are developed with some specific details, but there is not enough information to provide a sense of completeness.

Teaching tip: Although there is no magic number of paragraphs that result in a complete paper or a high score on the GHSWT, a brief paper rarely demonstrates enough development to receive more than minimal competence. One way writers can generate more supporting ideas is to think about all the different groups of people affected by the issue in the prompt and to think about who the problem affected in the past or will affect in the future.

Style Score: 2
Word choice is ordinary and repetitive ("cut down on solid waste . . . there aught to be . . . things of that nature"). Although there is some variety of sentence structure, the ordinary word choice creates a flat, uninteresting tone. The writer does attempt to engage the audience by addressing them directly ("Think about these ways of reducing solid waste.").

Conventions Score: 2+
The writer demonstrates mixed competence. Usage is stronger than mechanics. Subjects and verbs agree and nouns and verbs are formed correctly. There are only minor spelling errors, but many improperly used apostrophes and commas. The writer is using apostrophes in plural forms before the final "s."

Sentence Formation Score: 3
Most sentences are correctly formed with appropriate end punctuation. Coordination and subordination are demonstrated but are not sophisticated ("We've come up with a few ideas that our school can benefit from." "This way all you do is wash them and you won't have any milk cartons to worry about.").

Paper 3 - 4

Content/Organization Score: 1
While it is acceptable to take the position that "no problem exists," the writer fails to develop this position. A controlling idea is not established. The writer unsuccessfully attempts to develop the position that his school does not have a waste problem. Much of the paper consists of paraphrasing the prompt. The only main supporting ideas are the assertions that the school already has garbage cans and people to clean up the messes. These ideas are not developed. The last two "paragraphs" include irrelevant information and stray into a different topic.

Style Score: 1
Competence is not demonstrated in any of the components of Style. Diction, while correct, is repetitive and the tone is flat. There is no sentence variety. Several sentences are copied directly from the prompt, and many sentences begin with "we have." The paper does not seem to be directed to an audience.

Teaching tip: On the GHSWT, writers do not receive credit in any domain for sentences copied directly from the prompt. Students need to understand that the essay must be both completely developed and original.

Conventions Score: 2
Subject-verb agreement is correct, though there is repeated use of the verb "have." There are some errors in noun formation in the sentence "We have garbage can for our can, (like coke can)." The writer uses "thank" for "thanks." Paragraph indentation is correct, and there is minimal punctuation, including one comma and one apostrophe. Overall, the writer demonstrates mixed competence.

Sentence Formation Score: 2
The writer demonstrates competence in forming simple sentences. There is one sentence fragment. Due to the number of sentences copied directly from the prompt and the simplicity of what is correct, only minimal competence can be granted.

Paper 3 - 5

Content/Organization Score: 1

A controlling idea is not established. The writer's topic is probably saving animals from oil spills in the ocean, but organization is so poor that the reader is left confused. The paper lacks an introduction.

Teaching tip: Writing Prompt, Number 3 asks students to propose solutions for reducing solid waste in the school environment. Extrapolating the solid waste problem to the global environment and proposing ways to reducing waste world-wide is an acceptable redefinition of the prompt. Students could argue that while there is a solid waste problem at our school, there is a much bigger problem nation-wide or world-wide. By expanding the focus of the problem, students may be able to generate more relevant supporting ideas.

Style Score: 1

Word choice is imprecise ("In fact, People should have clean-up in the earth.") and repetitive ("Some people . . ."). The tone of the paper is flat. The writer talks about "people" but does not address a particular audience. Sentence structure is repetitive.

Teaching Tip: Before a writer can control language to establish his or her individuality, he or she must have at least a minimal understanding of the conventions of written language. It is difficult to demonstrate effective style with so many usage errors. If a writer demonstrates weaknesses in Conventions, it may be effective to target this domain for immediate instruction before working on the substance of Content/Organization and Style.

Conventions Score: 1

The paper contains severe and repeated errors in usage. Unclear pronoun reference and verb form errors make it difficult to understand the writer's ideas. The reader cannot tell who "some people" or "they" are. Spelling is generally correct, but formatting and capitalization are erratic. There is not enough demonstrated in mechanics to compensate for the severe problems in usage.

Sentence Formation Score: 2-

The writer demonstrates mixed competence in forming sentences. Simple sentences are formed correctly ("They used to throw the junks to the ocean or the ground."), but much of the paper consists of unsuccessful attempts at coordination ("The men who works with the earth and they are helping to save animals inside the water or the outside." "The men who works with the ships or boats to make sure everything is done but they check on oils to make sure it always stays inside."). Two sentences begin incorrectly with "But."

Dearest School Board,

Calculators are by all means an invaluable asset to the common student who labours diligently at his assignments however it is my firm opinion (due to a heinous crime that would have been perpetrated by the devious and psychotic genius of a third-grader had he been armed with a calculator) that these instruments of evil should, if not banned from this country entirely, be at least restricted in some manner so as to prevent the possibility of such an incident being repeated.

The child's name was Milt and he was an excellent student, however, as he was often left to his own devices, his mind began to warp. The diabolical plot which he so nearly executed was spawned in class one day as Mr. Pinkerton expounded to the children the relationships between the theory of relativity and the time-space continuum.

It was the year of 19— and the time of the passing of that now most celebrated discovery of Edmund Halley was at hand. Salisbury was green and lush and all things flourished near it. All was peaceful except the mind of Milt.

Milt, as I have already pointed, out was somewhat warped and as he lay awake at night he pondered the fathomless mysteries of the time space continuum. As he contemplated this, he was struck by a plan which to this day sends a chill onto my bones.

Halleys comet as we all know has a predictable orbit and is made up of particles of gas and dust. We also know that the time-space continuum has minute gaps in it. If Halley's comet could be forced through one of those gaps, the continuum would be forever disrupted and our universe would colapse upon itself.

Milt's plan was this: to steal his fathers rocket and unproc Plutonium and launch the two into the comets path. When the platonium came in contact with the frigid gases it would explode causing all the particles of the comet to ionize and thus be allowed to be pulled through the nearest gap in the continuum one atom at a time. All he lacked was a calculator to figure the precise angle at which to launch the rocket.

At the time I was at Southend-by-the-Sea visiting their Mistress of the Dark (Elvira wasn't the first but that story belongs elsewhere). She informed us of all that was going on and beseeched me to stop the little rascal so I took off for Salisbury.

When I found him, he was seated in the midst of Stonehenge praying. I just had time to switch his calculator for a TI-82. He sat for two hours entering calculations and when he called for the answer, all he got was "Error go to step 2". He repeated the process with the same result. The entire night this went on. By morning he was running into the rocks endeavoring to break them with his head, so I tackled him and bound him hand and foot. He is now residing in a comfortably small room with rubber lining the walls in one of Londons finest sanitoriums.

As you can clearly see, it is not only for reasons of national security but also for humane reasons (exempli gratia: the mental stability of our people) that I advocate the banning of calculators in school.

Your true and faithful servant

etc.,

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Writing Prompt, Number 5: Use of Calculators

Paper 5 - 1

Content/Organization Score: 4
The implied controlling idea is clear and strong (Calculators are not the menace they have been made out to be). The writer employs a novel response in the form of a fantasy about what nearly happened as the result of putting a calculator in the hands of a "devious and warped genius". The story is fully developed with logical transitions and a "tongue in cheek" irony. This is a very sophisticated piece and should not be used as the benchmark for all scores of "4" in Content/Organization.

Teaching Tip: This paper demonstrates how a writer can effectively use fantasy (a fictional story) to support a position on a given topic. The GHSWT is a test of persuasive writing, but many forms of persuasion are acceptable. It is not necessary to write the standard five-paragraph essay to receive a score of "4" in Content and Organization.

Style Score: 4
The vivid, precise, and varied word choice demonstrates the writer's highly developed control of language ("By morning he was ramming into the rocks endeavoring to break them . . ."). The ironic tone is strong and sustained throughout the response. Sentences are varied. The paper provides the reader with a clear sense of the writer's individuality. Again, this response should not be held as the benchmark for a "4" in Style as it exceeds the criteria.

Conventions Score: 4
The writer has a full and consistent command of both usage and mechanics. Competence is demonstrated in a wide variety of instances and contexts.

Sentence Formation Score: 4
The paper contains consistently clear, complete sentences. End punctuation is correct. Competence and a wide variety of both coordination and subordination strategies is demonstrated.

To whom it may concern.

I am a 17 year-old junior here at South High School. I am writing you this formal letter in response ~~for~~ to the rumors and talk going around concerning the highly controversial topic of social promotion. This topic is one of great heart-felt emotion for some and not for others. I however, feel very strongly about this issue because it has alot to do with my life and personality.

I was twelve ~~eight~~ years old and ~~I was~~ moving gingerly through through the sixth grade. I say gingerly simply because I was not having a good or for that matter enjoyable time in middle school. My grades as well as my motivation and opinion of what others thought of me were very low. I was not doing very well socially; I felt that I would never be "popular" and that I would end up becoming a nobody. I went several times that year to see my counselor about lots of different things. My parents had divorced 3 years earlier ~~ago~~ and I was in sixth grade and the head of my household. Being the oldest of two children, I would come home from school and stay with my younger brother until my mother got home. I was faced with much more responsibility than I deemed as being necessary. Well, to make a long, painful story short, I failed 4 out of 6 of my classes througout that sixth-grade year. Near the end of the fifth six weeks my counselor began to meet with my Mom to discuss the possibility of what they called "holding me back". Even though I did not know the technical, educational term for it, I had seen in my early years what happened to kids who "failed a grade". Not only were they seperated from their classmates, but it was for good. they could not "catch up" again and some of the "drop back" kids became so discouraged that they eventually turned into "drop out" kids.

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Early one May day, I was called into the counselors' office to have a conference with my mom and my counselor. They told me alot of things, none of which I really understood or cared to understand. I looked right at the back wall at a picture the entire time. Until my mother quietly told me that weather or not I moved on to the seventh grade was my decision.

I knew that I didn't need more stress and that this didn't help. It took me around two days to decide what I wanted. I felt that even though I might not make good homework grades, my test grades were usually more than decent, and I could grasp and understand just about anything that the teachers ~~throwing~~ threw at me. So, I told my counselor that I wanted to move on. She accepted my decision, and after warning me of the hard times ahead, followed through with it.

What did this decision do to me? Well, I made it through middle school, and went into what has been a wonderful 3 years "so far" of high school. I now have a 3.0 GPA and am in the top 100 of my class. I am now making plans to ~~go to~~ attend Berry College in the fall of '94, after making a 1250 on my SAT. My mom as well as my teachers are very proud of me, but most importantly I am proud of myself.

I am not saying that every student who does not do well in school ~~who~~ should be allowed to "ride the system" all the way through graduation. I'm just giving you good people an example of what can happen if you give a kid a chance. A second one, but a chance nonetheless.

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Writing Prompt, Number 7: Social Promotion

Paper 7 - 1

Content/Organization Score: 4
Using an extended narrative, the writer responds to the persuasive prompt with a fully developed personal experience. The writer's position on the issue is clear: social promotion can be effective for some children. The supporting ideas are presented logically with smooth, effective transitions.

Style Score: 4
The language is precise, vivid, and varied ("Even though I did not know the technical, educational term for it, I had seen in my early years what happened to kids who 'failed a grade.'" "I was faced with much more responsibility than I deemed as being necessary." "became so discouraged that they eventually turned into 'dropout' kids."). The tone is strong and sustained throughout the paper. Sentence structure is varied. The writer demonstrates a control of language that reveals his individuality and evokes an emotional response from the reader.

Conventions Score: 4
The writer demonstrates a full, consistent command of both usage and mechanics. Although the long second paragraph could have been divided into two paragraphs, it does not detract from the strengths shown in the other components. Each component is demonstrated in a wide variety of instances and contexts.

Sentence Formation Score: 4
The paper contains consistently clear, complete sentences. End punctuation is correct. Competence in both subordination and coordination are demonstrated in the wide variety of instances.

Additional Resources

GHSWT Domain Terminology

Content/Organization Domain

Argument. Argument refers to the line of reasoning used to show that something is true or false, valid or invalid.

Clear Controlling Idea. The controlling idea "sums up" a paper. It is not a title, repetition of key words from the topic, or a thesis statement. A thesis statement directly states a writer's intentions but does not guarantee that these intentions are realized. A thesis statement is not required for a controlling idea to be clear to the intended reader. A controlling idea may be either directly stated or implied.

Logical Transitions and Flow of Ideas. Transitions lead a reader through a paper. They serve the purpose of signaling the logical relationships between ideas and between sections of the paper. They vary from explicit signals such as transitional words to more subtle devices such as synonym and pronoun substitution. In addition to implicit and explicit transitions, completeness of information and a clear plan contribute to the flow of ideas.

Organization or Order of Presentation. Ideas in a paper may be ordered in many different ways. In an effective piece of writing, the order is appropriate to the writer's purpose and approach to the topic. An effective plan enables the reader to readily understand the writer's major points and to judge the relevance and appropriateness of the supporting ideas.

Persuasion. Persuasion is a method of convincing the audience that the writer's position is valid. A writer may employ several different persuasive methods including logical arguments, emotional appeals, personal experiences, facts (true or false), and pleading.

Relevant Supporting Ideas. Support includes appeals to reason and emotion. It varies from facts, to observations about the facts, to conclusions drawn from the facts. Support may be based on reasoning, opinions, emotion, humor, irony, satire, examples and illustrations, data, expert testimony, values, and assumptions. As the writing sample for the GHSWT test is written without access to resources, false or inaccurate facts have to be accepted as support.

Response to Assigned Task. Each prompt contains an assigned task linked to a controversial issue. The writer's general task requires taking a position on the issue and providing support for that position. Each prompt contains the issue to be addressed, the audience, and the format of the response. The rules for the format of the response, such as salutation and closing in a letter or opening remarks to the audience in the case of a speech, are not considered part of the required task and, therefore, are not scored.

Sense of Completeness. Sense of completeness refers to two features of a paper: (1) the paper's drawing to a natural close and (2) fullness of information. A sense of completeness is not the same as a concluding statement or paragraph; a paper may end with a "concluding" statement or paragraph and still be incomplete.

Style Domain

Diction. Diction refers to a writer's choice of words, determined on the basis of audience, subject matter, and purpose. Diction establishes the tone of a piece of writing. It is an essential element of a writer's style. Diction involves more than the dictionary meaning of a word. It includes the connotations (the associations, meanings, or emotions a word suggests) of words.

Sense of Audience. When the assigned prompt specifies the audience, the writer must anticipate and respond to the needs of that audience. Decisions about the appropriateness of support and the diction are made to ensure that the writer establishes a relationship with the audience. Regardless of the audience stated in the prompt, students are required to demonstrate language appropriate in a formal test setting.

Tone. Tone indicates the writer's sensitivity to the purpose of the paper and to the effect the paper should have on the reader. It is established through choice of words, style, and detail.

Varied Sentence Structure. Variety (of length, structure, word order, and type) contributes to maintaining a reader's interest by stimulating and appealing to the reader's "ear." Repetition of similar sentences throughout an entire piece of writing numbs the reader's "eye" and "ear." Occasional repetition (as in parallelism), however, adds to the style of a piece of writing.

Conventions of Written Language Domain

Complex Verb Forms. Sophisticated verb forms often involve verb phrases or an action verb with a helping verb.

Format. The visual aspect of format is rated in the Conventions domain. The format or the appearance of the paper (margins, paragraph indentions, spacing between words, and spacing between sentences) should aid the reader's comprehension of a piece of writing.

Mechanics. Mechanics includes correct capitalization, internal punctuation (apostrophes, commas, quotation marks, etc.), format, and spelling. The relative weight/value of different mechanics components is based upon their effect on the clear communication of a message.

Pronoun Reference. Pronoun reference consists of the relationship between a single word or group of words (the antecedent) and the pronoun replacement (the referent). The meaning of the pronoun should be immediately obvious to avoid confusion. Clarity is achieved through placement and consistency of person and number.

Standard American English and Standard Form. "Standard" refers to the use of those grammatical conventions agreed upon as the "language of the marketplace." Regionalisms and illiterate forms are considered incorrect and, thus, inappropriate in formal writing, except in extremely rare contexts. For example, a direct quote might contain nonstandard language yet be appropriate because the writer is quoting what was actually said. The preponderance of the evidence provided by the rest of the writing sample would be used to determine the writer's control of the agreed-upon forms for nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, as well as subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement.

Usage. Usage includes correct subject-verb agreement, clear and correct pronoun reference, standard forms of verbs and nouns, and the appropriate forms of adjectives and adverbs. Usage also includes an awareness of the difference between homonyms and other frequently confused words. The relative weight of different usage components is based upon their effect on the clear communication of a message.

Sentence Formation Domain

Coordination. Coordination refers to the connecting of equal grammatical structures to provide equal emphasis. A sentence with coordinate structure contains two or more clauses that could be sentences.

End Punctuation. End punctuation refers to the use of a period, question mark, or exclamation point to mark the end of a sentence. The absence of appropriate end punctuation creates errors such as run-ons, comma splices, and fused sentences.

Sentence Fragment or Functional Fragment. A fragment is written as if it were a complete sentence in terms of capitalization and end punctuation. A fragment may be created by the placement of a period between a main clause and a subordinate clause. Punctuation-based fragments are considered Sentence Formation errors. A functional fragment is not an error, however. The writer uses the fragment to create a particular effect ("And when were we leaving? In the morning! Bright and early!"). Fragments are Sentence Formation errors. Functional fragments are not.

Subordination. Subordination refers to a method of connecting structures so that some structures have less emphasis than others. A sentence with subordinate structure contains two or more clauses, at least one of which could not be a sentence.

Diagnostic Statements from the Individual Student Score Report

Once a student composition has been scored, the scores of the independent raters are combined for a total domain score. Each score level has associated descriptive statements that appear on the Individual Student Report that is returned to the school. All possible statements that can appear on Student Reports for each domain are shown below. These descriptions correspond to a continuum or range of performance in each domain. Teachers may find it useful as they plan instruction or assist in remediation to look at the statements on a particular student's report in relation to the descriptions shown below. This may help identify what needs to be done to improve the student's writing skills. (The total of the raw scores assigned by the two raters can be determined by adding "1" to the Level.)

Content/Organization Domain

Level VII (Scores of 4+4)
The paper contained a strong, clear controlling idea established through directly relevant supporting ideas. The paper contained full, evenly developed supporting ideas. The support (examples, illustrations, facts, details, logic, appeals to emotions, opinions) was presented in a clear and logical manner, with effective transitions.

Level VI (Scores of 4+3)
The paper contained a clear controlling idea established through relevant supporting ideas. The paper contained sufficient supporting ideas but may have demonstrated some uneven development or lacked the specific details necessary for full development. Supporting ideas were presented in a logical order. Transitions, when used, were generally effective.

Level V (Scores of 3+3)
The paper contained a clear controlling idea established and developed through generally relevant supporting ideas. The paper may have strayed into an occasional irrelevant idea. Supporting ideas were generally presented in a logical order with enough support for the writer's position to be considered complete. Development of the supporting ideas may have been uneven.

Level IV (Scores of 3+2)
The paper contained a controlling idea that may not have been sustained throughout the piece of writing. While the writer's intentions were apparent, supporting ideas may have been underdeveloped or unevenly developed.

Level III (Scores of 2+2)
The paper contained a vague or poorly developed controlling idea or several unrelated controlling ideas. The paper may have lacked a sense of completeness because the supporting ideas were too few, general, irrelevant, or underdeveloped. Although the paper may have contained a plan, the writer's ideas were repeated rather than developed.

Level II (Scores of 2+1)
The paper contained unrelated controlling ideas or lacked the development and organization necessary to clarify and elaborate the writer's position on the issue. The paper was characterized by repetition.

Level I (Scores 1+1)
The paper lacked the development and organization necessary to establish a clear controlling idea. The paper may have been limited to a repetition of the prompt or a statement of the writer's position. The paper may have been confusing because it lacked a plan, had irrelevant ideas, or contained incomplete information.

(NOTE: Papers that are Off Topic are not scored in Content/Organization.)

Style Domain

Level VII (Scores of 4+4)
The paper established a clear sense of the writer's individuality. The word choice was precise, valid, and varied, revealing an awareness of the different levels of meaning that words have. The effective use of varied sentence structures enhanced meaning. The tone was not only appropriate but consistently sustained. Overall, the paper conveyed

full awareness of both "what" needed to be said and "how" to say it for the intended audience.

Level VI (Scores of 4+3)
The paper established a sense of the writer's individuality. Word choice was engaging and precise, conveying an awareness of the dictionary meaning of words. Sentence structure was varied. The tone was appropriate for the topic and purpose and sustained through most of the paper. The paper demonstrated a clear awareness of the intended audience.

Level V (Scores of 3+3)
The paper conveyed a sense of the writer's individuality. Word choice was engaging and sometimes precise. While effective, however, it may have been limited in variety. Sentence structure was varied; if repetitive, repetition was done for effect. The tone was appropriate for the topic and purpose and was generally sustained. The paper was written to a clearly recognizable audience.

Level IV (Scores of 3+2)
The paper conveyed some sense of the writer's individuality. Word choice was a combination of ordinary and engaging language. Sentence structure tended to be repetitive. The tone of the paper may not have been appropriate for either the audience or the purpose. If appropriate, the tone was not sustained throughout the paper. Overall, it appeared that the writer lacked a consistent understanding of the audience.

Level III (Scores of 2+2)
The paper demonstrated little individuality. Word choice was generally simple and ordinary and, even if correct, was not engaging. Sentence structure may have varied little if at all. The tone of the paper may have been inappropriate for the audience or persuasive purpose. If appropriate, the tone was not sustained throughout. Overall, it appeared that the writer experienced some confusion about the audience.

Level II (Scores of 2+1)
The paper demonstrated little or no individuality. Word choice was simple and repetitive and sometimes incorrect. Sentence structure may have varied little if at all. The tone of the paper was inconsistent with the persuasive purpose. Overall, it appeared that the writer experienced confusion about the audience.

Level I (Scores of 1+1)
The paper did not demonstrate the writer's individuality. Word choice was repetitive or lacked variety and may have been incorrect. Sentence structure was repetitive. The tone of the paper was flat or otherwise inappropriate for the audience or persuasive purpose. The paper conveyed no sense that it was directed to a particular audience. The paper may have been too brief for the writer to demonstrate his or her writing style.

(NOTE: Papers that are OFF Topic are not scored in Style.)

Conventions of Written Language Domain

Level VII (Scores of 4+4)
The paper demonstrated a full, consistent command of usage and mechanics. The paper demonstrated the writer's ability to use a variety of the conventions appropriate for written Standard American English.

Level VI (Scores of 4+3)
The paper demonstrated command of usage and mechanics. The paper demonstrated the writer's ability to use a variety of conventions in either usage or mechanics.

Level V (Scores of 3+3)
The paper demonstrated control in several aspects of usage and mechanics. The minor or infrequent errors in the paper did not interfere with meaning. However, the paper lacked variety in usage and mechanics; the same forms were repeated.

Level IV (Scores of 3+2)

The paper demonstrated inconsistent control of the conventions of usage and mechanics. The paper may have demonstrated control in usage or in mechanics, but not both.

Level III (Scores of 2+2)
The paper demonstrated a limited grasp of usage and mechanics with repeated or varied weaknesses in the command of written Standard American English. The paper may have contained a combination of simple, correct forms and incorrect forms.

Level II (Scores of 2+1)
The paper often demonstrated an insufficient understanding of the conventions of usage and mechanics. The paper may have been too brief to demonstrate appropriate usage and mechanics. Instances of correct forms were offset by errors. Errors interfered with meaning.

Level I (Scores of 1+1)
The paper demonstrated an insufficient grasp of written Standard American English. The paper may have contained repeated or varied errors in usage and mechanics which created a barrier to comprehension. The paper may have been too brief to demonstrate appropriate usage and mechanics.

Sentence Formation Domain

Level VII (Scores of 4+4)
The paper contained consistently clear, complete sentences with correct end punctuation. The various elements withing the sentences were joined correctly, and the ideas within sentences were connected properly. Competence in both subordination and coordination of ideas was demonstrated through a variety of strategies.

Level VI (Scores of 4+3)
The paper contained clear, complete sentences with correct end punctuation. The various elements within the sentences were joined correctly, and the ideas were connected properly.

Competence in both subordination and coordination was demonstrated but lacking in variety.

Level V (Scores of 3+3)
The paper contained a majority of clear and complete sentences, with generally correct end punctuation. Competence in either coordination or subordination was demonstrated. Subordination, when present, was limited to simple clauses. There may have been sentence fragments or run-ons, but these errors were outweighed by clear, correct sentences.

Level IV (Scores of 3+2)
The paper demonstrated mixed control of sentence formation and the use of compound elements within sentences. The paper may have consisted mostly of clear, simple sentences with few compound sentences. The occasional run-on or sentence fragment interfered with meaning.

Level III (Scores of 2+2)
The paper demonstrated minimal competence in sentence formation and the use of compound elements within sentences. Evidence of control demonstrated by correctly formed sentences was offset by incorrect sentences. Sentence structure errors required the reader to reread in order to determine meaning.

Level II (Scores of 2+1)
The paper contained few clear, complete sentences with appropriate end punctuation. Sentence structure errors required the reader to reread in order to determine the writer's meaning. The paper may have been too brief to demonstrate sufficient control of sentence formation.

Level I (Scores of 1+1)
The paper did not contain clear, complete sentences with appropriate end punctuation. Fragments and/or run-ons occurred frequently in the paper. Sentence structure errors interfered with meaning. The paper may have been too brief to demonstrate correct sentence formation.

Recommended Readings

Arquilevich, Gabriel. Writing for 100 Days. Avon Books

Atwell, Nancie. In the Middle. Heinemann - Boynton Cook

Baines, Lawrence and Kinkel, A. Going Bohemian. IRA

Calkins, Lucy. Between the Lines. Heinemann - Boynton Cook

Calkins, Lucy. The Art of Teaching Writing. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Cleary, Linda. From the Other Side of the Desk. Heinemann - Boynton Cook

Fletcher, Ralph. A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You. Avon Books

Fletcher, Ralph. Live Writing: Breathing Life into Your Words. Avon Books

Fletcher, Ralph and Portalupi, J. Craft Lessons. Stenhouse

Fulwiler, Toby. The Journal Book. Heinemann - Boynton Cook

Goldberg, Natalie. Writing Down the Bone. Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Hansen, Jane. When Writers Read, Second Edition. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Heard, Georgia. Writing Toward Home. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Mayher, John and Lester, N. Writing to Learn/Learning to Write. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Murray, Donald M. A Writer Teaches Writing. Houghton Mifflin.

Romano, Tom. Writing with Passion: Life Stories, Multiple Genres. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Rule, Rebecca and Wheeler, S. True Stories: Guides for Writing from Your Life. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Tsujimoto, Joseph. Lighting Fires: How the Passionate Teacher Engages Adolescents. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Zemelman, Stephen and Daniels, H. A Community of Writers. Heinemann-Boynton Cook

Blackline Masters

This section contains Blackline Masters for teachers to use to prepare handouts and overhead transparencies. The Blackline Masters include

- A writing prompt, with the parts labeled
- A sample of the student test materials (Writing Topic and Note Page, Drafting Sheet, and Answer Document with Directions)
- The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context
- Graphic Organizers
- A Jot List Prewriting Activity

1. Issue

2. [Descriptive Setup]

Writing Prompt, Number 1

Writing Situation

The issue of censoring or banning books has received much national attention. Recently, however, [the controversy became a local issue when parents in your community objected to a book that their teenager had obtained from the high school library. The parents' campaign to have the book removed permanently from the library has aroused mixed reactions from students, teachers and other parents.] Decide how you feel about the issue of banning books.

3. Knowledge base is implicit in the issue. Students can respond on a personal basis (what if books I wanted to read were censored) or an academic basis (first amendment rights, freedom of speech).

6. Form and Audience

4. [Writer's Purpose and the Writing Task]

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper in which you [either defend a parent's right to have a book banned or oppose such a ban.] Clearly state your position. Try to convince readers of the paper to agree with you by providing well-developed supporting arguments.

5. Audience

Student Name ______________________

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL WRITING TEST

Writing Topic and Note Page

Form 1

Writing Situation

The issue of censoring or banning books has received much national attention. Recently, however, the controversy became a local issue when parents in your community objected to a book that their teenager had obtained from the high school library. The parents' campaign to have the book removed permanently from the library has aroused mixed reactions from students, teachers and other parents. Decide how you feel about the issue of banning books.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper in which you either defend a parent's right to have a book banned or oppose such a ban. Clearly state your position. Try to convince readers of the paper to agree with you by providing well-developed supporting arguments.

NOTES

Student Name ______________________________

DRAFTING SHEET

PLEASE PRINT

Last Name: ______________________

First Name: ______________ MI: ______

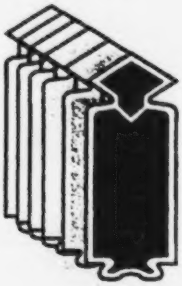
Date of Birth: Month ______ Year ______

Date of Testing: Month ______ Day ______ Year ______

School Name: ______________________

System Name: ______________________

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL WRITING TEST



SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER/ STUDENT NUMBER

			-		-			
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2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
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4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

ETHNIC GROUP

○ Asian, Pacific Islander
○ Black, Non-Hispanic
○ Hispanic
○ American Indian, Alaskan Native
○ White, Non-Hispanic
○ Multi-racial

DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENT SOUGHT

○ Technology/Career Preparatory
○ College Preparatory
○ Dual Seal

GENDER

○ Female ○ Male

NUMBER OF TIMES TESTED

○ 1 ○ 3 ○ 5+
○ 2 ○ 4

GRADE

○ 11
○ 12
○ Other/I don't know
I have already left school with a
○ Certificate of Performance
○ Special Education Diploma

SRC

○ 01	○ 10
○ 02	○ 11
○ 03	○ 12
○ 04	○ 13
○ 05	○ 14
○ 06	○ 15
○ 07	○ 16
○ 08	○ 17
○ 09	○ 18

ACCOMMODATIONS
(Leave blank if no accommodations)

An ACCOMMODATION was allowed based on
○ IEP
○ Section 504 IAP

DO NOT WRITE OR MAKE ANY MARKS IN THE SPACE BELOW.

PLACE LABEL SO TOP OF NUMBER IS AT THIS SIDE.

PLACE LABEL SO BOTTOM OF BARS IS AT THIS SIDE.

LAST NAME (FIRST 12 LETTERS)												FIRST NAME (FIRST 10 LETTERS)										MI
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
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H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I
J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J	J
K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K	K
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R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
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Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z

DATE OF BIRTH

MONTH	YEAR		
	19		
○ Jan			0
○ Feb			1
○ Mar			2
○ Apr			3
○ May			4
○ Jun			5
○ Jul			6
○ Aug		7	7
○ Sep		8	8
○ Oct			9
○ Nov			
○ Dec			

LOCAL USE		FORM NUMBER	
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

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DIRECTIONS

This test is to find out how well you write prose on a given topic in the time and space allowed. The test has four time periods or parts. Read the directions for each of these four parts carefully. The times given for each part are recommendations, not rules; if you finish any of the parts early, you may go on to the next part. Notice that you have two pages of lined space in this Answer Document on which to write your final draft. Keep in mind as you plan and write that your final copy must fit into this space. Your paper will be read by trained raters and scored on how well you express your ideas. **In order for your paper to be properly scored, it is very important that you write on the given topic and in prose. Papers that consist entirely or mostly of poetry, musical lyrics, or rap will not be scored.** Additionally, papers that are offensive in language or content may not be scored.

Part 1: Planning/Prewriting (15 minutes)

Read your assigned topic on the Writing Topic and Note Page. Review the Writing Checklist to make sure you cover each of the points listed. Use the space provided for your notes, jot list, or outline.

Part 2: Drafting (30 minutes)

Using your notes, jot list, or outline, write a first draft of your paper on the Drafting Sheet. Don't worry too much about mechanics at this point. Concentrate on getting your ideas down on paper in a logical order.

Part 3: Revising (35 minutes)

Reread what you have written. Ask yourself if your ideas are clearly and completely expressed. Consider rearranging your ideas and changing words to make your paper better. Rewrite your paper on pages 3 and 4 of this Answer Document. When you rewrite, make sure that you use a blue or black ink pen and that you write neatly. You may either print or write in cursive. Do not use pages 1 or 2 of the Answer Document for your writing and do not write in the margins.

Part 4: Proofreading (10 minutes)

When you finish writing your paper, review the points on the Writing Checklist and make any needed corrections in your paper. You may strike through words, but do so neatly. Do not use correction fluid.

WRITING CHECKLIST

Prepare Yourself to Write
- Read the topic carefully
- Understand the purpose
- Identify the audience

Make Your Paper Meaningful
- State a clearly developed position
- Use specific, convincing, and interesting details
- Present ideas in a clear order

Make Your Paper Interesting to Read
- Use effective word choice
- Vary the sentence type, structure, and length
- Use convincing and appealing supporting details

Make Your Paper Easy to Read
- Write effective paragraphs
- Use effective transitions
- Write in complete and correct sentences
- Capitalize, spell, and punctuate correctly
- Write legibly

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

■■■○○■○○■○■○■■○○○○■○○○○○

275751

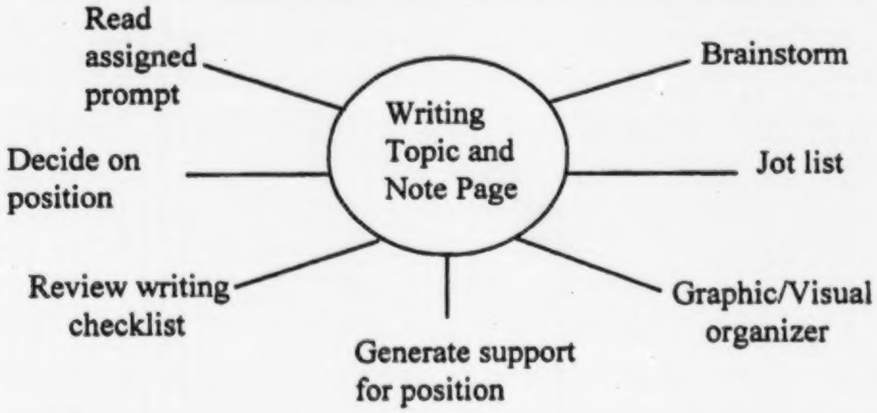
FORM NUMBER ____________ ○ Main Administration ○ Make-up Administration (For Absentees Only) ○ Special Administration

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

275751

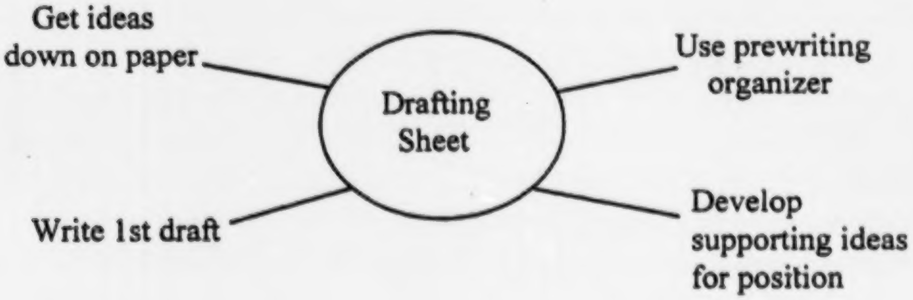
The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context

Part 1: Plan / Prewrite (15 minutes)


Read assigned prompt
Brainstorm
Writing Topic and Note Page
Decide on position
Jot list
Review writing checklist
Graphic/Visual organizer
Generate support for position

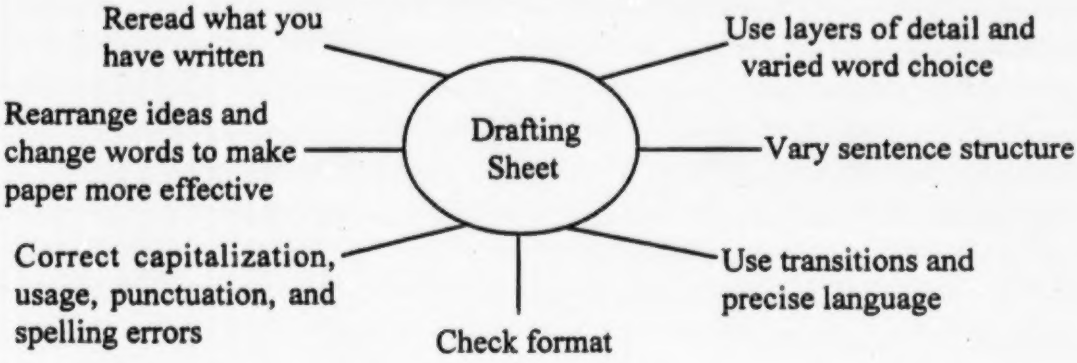
The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context

Part 2: Draft (30 minutes)


Get ideas down on paper
Use prewriting organizer
Drafting Sheet
Write 1st draft
Develop supporting ideas for position

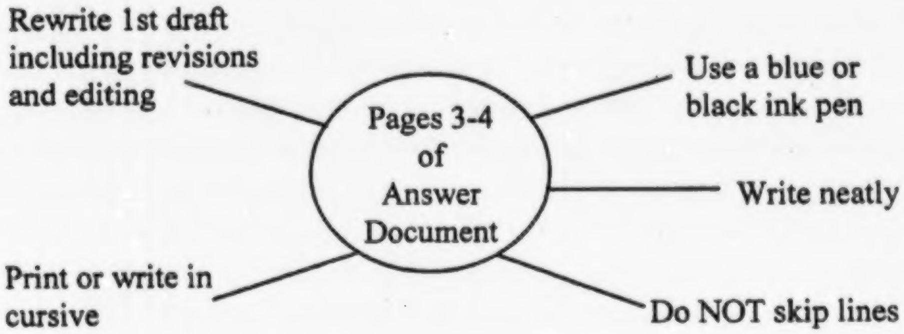
The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context

Part 3: Revise and Edit (25 minutes)


Reread what you have written
Use layers of detail and varied word choice
Rearrange ideas and change words to make paper more effective
Drafting Sheet
Vary sentence structure
Correct capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling errors
Check format
Use transitions and precise language

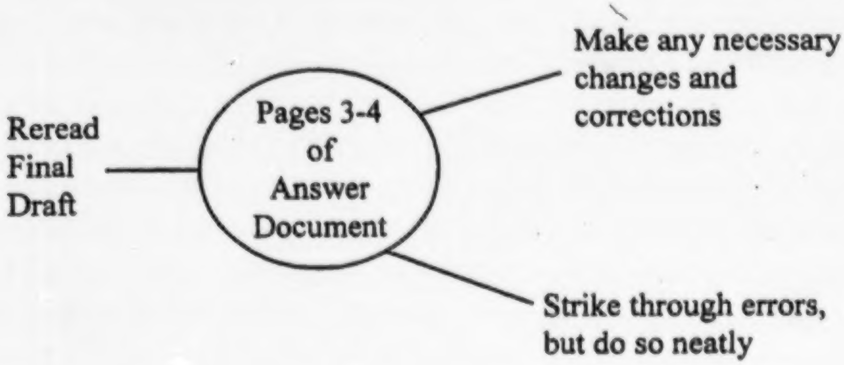
The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context

Part 4: Final Draft (15 minutes)


Rewrite 1st draft including revisions and editing
Use a blue or black ink pen
Pages 3-4 of Answer Document
Write neatly
Print or write in cursive
Do NOT skip lines

The Persuasive Writing Process in the Testing Context

Part 5: Proofread (5 minutes)


Pages 3-4 of Answer Document
Reread Final Draft
Make any necessary changes and corrections
Strike through errors, but do so neatly

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Brainstorming for Narrative Support

TOPIC OR ISSUE ____________________

AUDIENCE ____________________

Writer's Position on the Issue ____________________

____

____

Stories (real or imagined) that are directly related to the writer's position

Who? _____ What? _____ Why or How? _____

1.

____

2.

____

3.

____

4.

____

Note: The writer selects and develops the narrative that provides the strongest support for his or her position.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Organizing/Structuring for Narrative Support

Introduction to Topic/Issue

Ideas:

Story
The Narrative

Conclusion, stating writer's position

Ideas:

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Brainstorming for Counterargument

TOPIC OR ISSUE ____________________

AUDIENCE ____________________

WRITER'S POSITION ON THE ISSUE ____________________

____

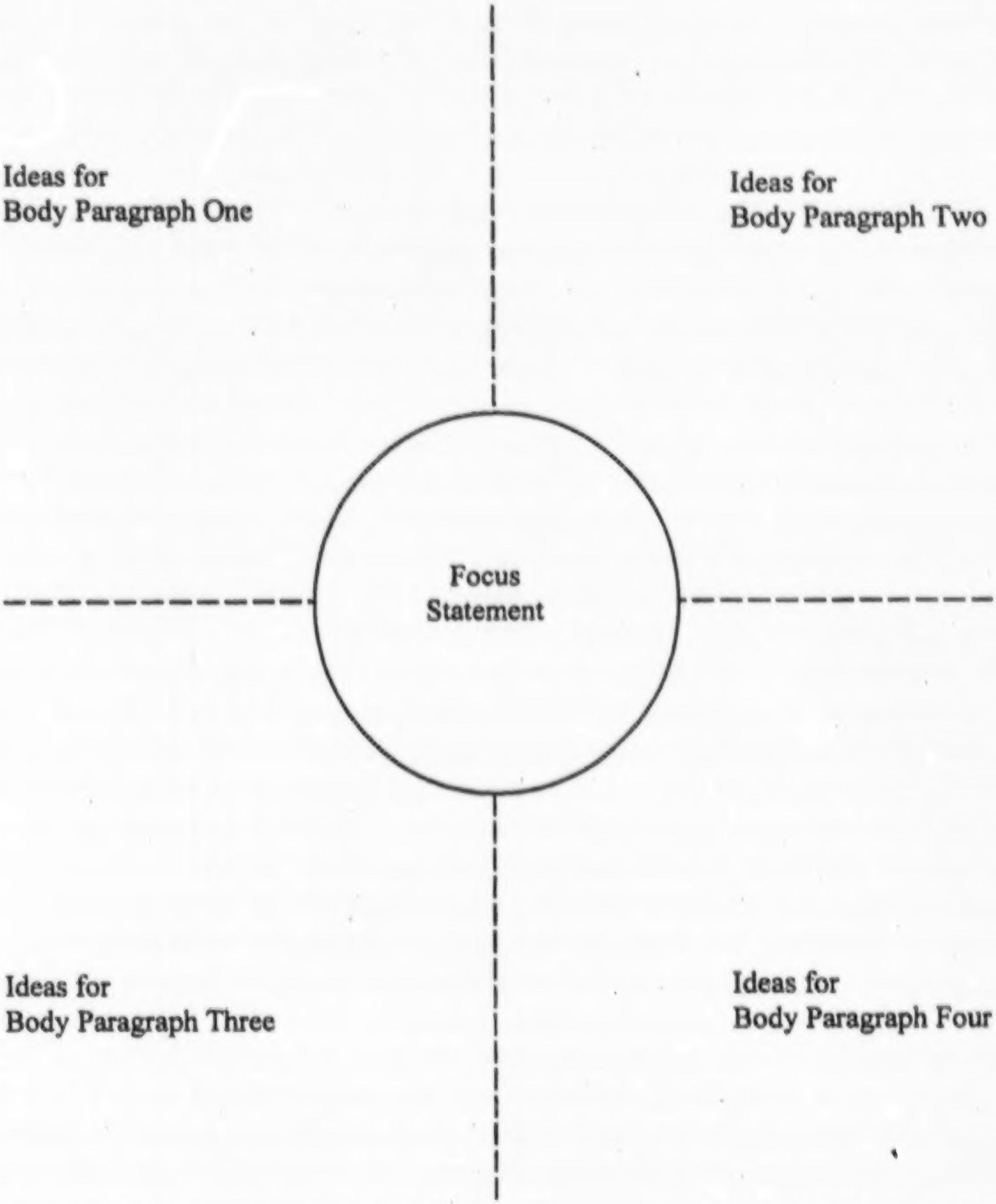
____

COUNTERARGUMENT

Likely Objections to the Writer's Position	Writer's Counterarguments to the Objections
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Prewriting Strategy


Ideas for Body Paragraph One
Ideas for Body Paragraph Two
Focus Statement
Ideas for Body Paragraph Three
Ideas for Body Paragraph Four

Source: Perry Middle School Teachers: Linda Williams, Robyn Magerkurth, Lula Wynn, Julie Bragg, Sandra Wiley

A Jot List Prewriting Activity

Generating Ideas and Creating Organization Through the Use of a Jot List

Once the student understands the writing topic, the next step is to come up with meaningful ideas to allow the student to write a well organized essay. The use of a jot list can be beneficial in generating ideas and helping writers discover what they know about a topic. The following list is more extensive than any one student would create. It is provided to illustrate that a jot list on the same topic may suggest the structure of a comparison/contrast essay to one writer, while another writer may find the beginnings of a personal narrative, and another student could discover a single line of argument that can be fully developed.

Writing Topic, Number 8

Writing Situation

For generations, critics have complained about the influence music has on young people. Yet music continues to be an important part of a teenager's life. What music is appropriate for teens?

Directions for Writing

Write a speech to these critics explaining the type or types of music that you consider appropriate for teens. Present a well-developed argument.

Step 1, Creating the Jot List

When you lead a brainstorming session to create a group jot list such as the one on the next page, or when an individual creates a jot list, record all ideas that surface. Leave sufficient space between ideas to add developing and supporting points that emerge as the jot list evolves. The example that follows is a group jot list. For the writing test, students will of course have to know how to brainstorm, select and organize on their own. The jot list on the next page is more polished and complete than students would need to produce so that teachers can use it as a teaching tool.

#, +	All types of music are acceptable because people should be allowed freedom of artistic expression.
x	Some types of music support and even glorify negative aspects of life. – “gangsta” rap – country western - infidelity, drunkenness
•	Some types of music may not appeal to teenagers because they are “out of style.”
•	Elevator music isn’t really music at all.
#, +	You can learn a lot about other people through listening to their music. – other cultural, ethnic groups Native American rhythm and blues classical music – other generations – different perspectives on life
#	Some music which is considered classic now was once considered inappropriate for young people. – “The Charleston” - flappers – Elvis and his gyrating hips
•	Early ballads told stories of tragedies and hardships of life. – murder ballads – ballads of infidelity, treason
x	Some people say that certain types of music are associated with drug and alcohol abuse. – heavy metal – alternative – rap – country western
#, +	Positive influences of music: – social consciousness/environmentalism – meditation/relaxation – social protest - Music can provide acceptable, appropriate outlet for protest.
†	S opportunity to be with my friends and hang out with people who enjoy the same type of music – Christian rock
#	Adults are always looking for ways to criticize teenagers.
•	Oldies should be banned along with opera.

Legend for symbols

# relevant to the topic of appropriate music for teens

+ reasons “for”

x reasons “against”

• irrelevant to the topic of appropriate music for teens

† idea that can be turned into a narrative that supports the writer’s position

Step 2, Using the Jot List to Organize the First Draft

- Re-read the topic. State the issue and the purpose in order to determine the relevance of the items in the list.
- Eliminate irrelevant items from the jot list.
- In the jot list provided above, the irrelevant ideas have been marked with an asterisk (*). They are irrelevant because they deal with matters of musical taste or definitions of types of music rather than addressing the issue of appropriate music for teens.
- Identify connections which will lead to organization of an essay.
- Order the major supporting ideas before writing the first draft.
- If support is uneven, add examples, facts, or other "evidence" to the weaker arguments.

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Educational Resources Information Center

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